

Southern Representation

DRAWER 109

RECONSTRUCTION

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Slavery

Reconstruction

Southern Representation

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

MONDAY MORNING

American and Gazette.

SOUTHERN REPRESENTATION.

As the proposed amendment to the national Constitution bids fair to be accepted by the requisite number of States, the matter of representation as affected by it becomes very important. We therefore quote the second section of the amendment, which treats of the subject:

Section 2. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed; but whenever the right to vote at any election for Electors of President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, executive and judicial officers, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

We give below a statement showing the white and black population in the southern States in 1860; the number of votes in the same year, and the number of colored males over twenty-one years of age:

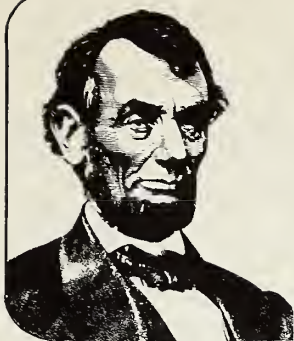
		Population voters in		Number of Colored males over 21.
		in 1860.	1860.	
Alabama,	whites,	529,121	56,357	—
"	blacks,	435,060	—	46,046
Arkansas,	whites,	324,335	54,053	—
"	blacks,	111,115	—	18,531
Delaware,	whites,	110,418	16,539	—
"	blacks,	1,798	—	262
Florida,	whites,	78,679	14,347	—
"	blacks,	61,475	—	11,183
Georgia,	whites,	595,088	166,355	—
"	blacks,	462,198	—	82,306
Louisiana,	whites,	376,276	50,510	—
"	blacks,	331,726	—	44,016
Maryland,	whites,	599,860	92,502	—
"	blacks,	87,189	—	13,339
Mississippi,	whites,	354,674	69,120	—
"	blacks,	436,631	—	84,983
Missouri,	whites,	1,097,051	165,518	—
"	blacks,	114,931	—	17,783
N. Carolina,	whites,	661,563	96,230	—
"	blacks,	331,059	—	48,072
S. Carolina,	whites,	301,308	44,000	—
"	blacks,	402,406	—	58,764
Tennessee,	whites,	834,082	145,333	—
"	blacks,	275,719	—	47,610
Texas,	whites,	421,649	62,986	—
"	blacks,	182,566	—	26,862
Virginia,	whites,	739,479	167,723	—
"	blacks,	472,364	—	106,662

An inspection of this table will show that if the southern States should enfranchise the blacks with a view of increasing their representative strength in Congress, there will be a staunch and loyal party of voters in every State. In Mississippi the black voters would outnumber the whites by 15,863 majority, and in South Carolina by 14,764. Those two States, therefore, would be Republican, and would reject the disloyal candidates at every election. If there were a loyal white party in the south, the black voters would be sufficient to give them a majority in several other States,

as in Louisiana and Alabama. If the south should not enfranchise the blacks its representation would suffer thus:

		Actual number of members.	Under the Constitutional Amendment.
Alabama,	-	7	4
Arkansas,	-	2	2
Delaware,	-	1	1
Florida,	-	1	1
Georgia,	-	7	4
Louisiana,	-	4	2
Maryland,	-	5	4
Mississippi,	-	5	2
Missouri,	-	9	8
North Carolina,	-	8	5
South Carolina,	-	6	2
Tennessee,	-	8	6
Texas,	-	4	3
Virginia,	-	8	6
Total,	-	75	50

In examining this last table by the light of the statistics given above, we find that unless the blacks were enfranchised the Representatives in Congress from South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana would not be the elect of the majority, but of the minority, and that the worst part of the population because so recently rebellious. South Carolina loses no less than four members by the amendment, and Mississippi three. Should there be a general enfranchisement of the blacks, the majority of the representation from the south would undoubtedly be radical Republicans; for although the blacks themselves are a minority in the whole south, they could unite with the loyal Union party of whites in every State, and elect men of their own choice. It will be seen, therefore, that no guarantee for the future loyalty of the conquered States could be half as effectual as the enfranchisement of the blacks, who constitute a solid Union force, and would soon learn to make their political weight available. Congress having no power over the franchise, can only act indirectly in the manner chosen in this amendment, which seems to us to be based on just principles. If the rebellious population were disposed to abandon their purpose of making a merit of treason, this amendment would occasion them no uneasiness at all. But as it is now apparent that we can expect from the conquered rebels no more loyalty than they are necessitated to show, we owe it to our country to give the political power of the south into loyal hands, if we can legitimately manage to do so.



Lincoln Lore

June, 1973

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Number 1624

JOHN TOURO TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN, JANUARY 7, 1865: NEW ORLEANS UNDER THE "BEAST" AND BANKS

A Newly Acquired Letter to Lincoln

Washington City,
January 7th, 1865.

To His Excellency

Abraham Lincoln,

President of the United States,

Sir:

Various loyal citizens of New Orleans, La, feeling themselves agrieved by the action of the military authorities at that point, have delegated me to lay their cause of complaint before your Excellency, and ask from you such relief as your wisdom, and sense of justice, may deem proper to extend to them.

The parties who I have the honor to represent, are loyal to the Government of the United States, having taken the required oath under the Amnesty proclamation, issued by you, and which fact, pursuant to your proclamation, if their status as to loyalty is satisfactorily established, relieves them from the effects of all military orders affecting their rights as loyal citizens, and more particularly, when by your proclamation of January 1st, 1863, you declare the City of New Orleans, and the Parish of Orleans, as not in a state of rebellion!

The cause of complaint of those whom I have the honor to represent, is as follows:

After the occupation of the City of New Orleans, by Genl B. F. Butler, he, by order No. 55, dated August 4, 1862, made an assessment upon certain of the citizens of that place who it was alleged had subscribed to the "Committee of Safety", for the advancement of the Rebel cause, and required them to pay the full amount in quarterly installments, and which fund was to be appropriated for the benefit of the poor of that City, See exhibit No. 1, Pages 17, and 18.

Agreeably to that order, the parties duly paid three installments, the last pursuant to order No. 144, of date October 3rd, 1864, by command of Major Genl Hurlburt, herewith submitted, marked No. 2: The parties were without remedy, being compelled to pay the same within 24 hours from the receipt [sic] of order, or else subjected to imprisonment, and seizure of

their property! This installment was paid, but under protest, the parties alleging with great force that they were in fact and in law relieved from the effect of the order of Genl Butler, No. 55, by your amnesty proclamation, and by their conforming to its provisions by taking the oath of allegiance prescribed, by recognizing the supremacy of the Government of the United States, and conforming to all the laws thereof!

The object of that proclamation was to induce parties to return to their allegiance, and when they have done so, and are living in a section declared by you not to be in rebellion, justice demands that they should not be held responsible for past offences after their pardon has been fully granted by you.

They therefore ask as loyal citizens of the Government of the United States, that, they may be relieved from the oppressiveness of this order, and that the last installment paid by them which was after the date of your amnesty proclamation, and their taking the required oath, and establishing their loyalty, be refunded to them by the proper authorities, upon satisfactory evidence establishing their loyalty, and that order No. 55, so far as the fourth, and last installment is concerned, may be rescinded!

Your petitioners cannot believe that the intent of the Government is to oppress them, by receiving, and considering them as loyal citizens of the United States, and at the same time punish them as enemies, which is in fact the effect of the continuance of this order of Genl Butler.

I present for your consideration the petition of E. Giquel, one of the parties in interest, see No. 3, with the accompanying papers, which will fully show the facts of the case presented for your consideration.

Feeling satisfied that your Excellency desires to do ample justice to all parties, I submit the cause of my friends to your determination, with every assurance that you will extend to them the relief which in justice, and in law, they are entitled to.

I have the honor to be,
Your very Obedt Servt,

John Touro

of New Orleans
at Willards Hotel
Washington City
D. C.

Washington City,
January 7th, 1865.
To His Excellency
Abraham Lincoln,
President of the United States,
Sir:
Various loyal
citizens of New Orleans, La, feeling
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plaint before your Excellency, and ask
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From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

John Touro's letter to Abraham Lincoln is written on the front and back of two ruled pages. A third page is blank on the front but bears on the back the remarks, "Papers submitted By John Touro, of New Orleans La. Praying that order No. 55 issued by Gen'l B. F. Butler, may be rescinded." Below this appears an apparently forged Lincoln endorsement.

New Orleans under Federal Control

On May 1, 1862, General Benjamin F. Butler assumed control of the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. In his autobiography, entitled simply *Butler's Book*, the former Democratic politician from Massachusetts who, as a delegate to the Charleston convention in 1860, had voted fifty-seven times for Jefferson Davis to be the Democratic nominee for president, explained the situation he occupied in a city removed by federal forces from Jefferson Davis's Confederate domain: "Having supreme power, I used it in the manner I have set forth."

Butler took his job seriously, attempting not only to maintain the city's functions in some minimal way until Louisiana assumed more normal relations with the United States but also to improve the city. The New Englander was appalled at the conditions in the Southern city. Touring New Orleans with his wife early in May, Butler "came upon the 'basin,' a broad opening or pond for the reception of canal boats." *Butler's Book* describes the experience this way:

As we approached the "basin," the air seemed filled with the most noxious and offensive stench possible, —so noxious as almost to take away the power of breathing. The whole surface of the canal and the pond was covered with a thick growth of green vegetable scum, variegated with dead cats and dogs or the remains of dead mules on the banking. The sun shone excessively hot, and the thermometer might have been 120°. We turned to the right and went down along the canal as far as Lake Pontchartrain, finding it all in the same condition until within a few rods of the lake. We drove back by a very different route.

Butler summoned the city superintendent of streets and canals and asked him what was the matter with the canal.

"Nothing, that I know of, General."

"Have you been up lately to the head of it?"

"Yes; there yesterday."

"Didn't you observe anything special when you were there?"

"No, General."

"Not an enormous stink?"

"No more than usual, General; no more than there always is."

"Do you mean to tell me that the canal always looks and stinks like that?"

"In hot weather, General."

"When was it cleaned out last?"

"Never, to my knowledge, General."

"Well, it must be cleaned out at once, and that nuisance abated."

"I cannot do it, General."

"Why not?"

"I don't know how."

"Very well, your services are no longer required by the government for the city. I will find somebody who does know how. Good-morning, sir."

Fearing that the Confederates were "relying largely upon the yellow fever to clear out the Northern troops," Butler obtained a history of the yellow fever epidemic that struck New Orleans in 1853, he found a map shaded to indicate the areas of the city heaviest hit by the epidemic, and he inspected those areas. "I thought I detected why it raged in those spots," said Butler, "they were simply astonishingly filthy with rotting matter."

Butler instituted a program to fight the fever. First, he established "a very strict quarantine," stopping vessels entering the port for inspection by a health officer. Any ship found with sickness on board was required to stay away for forty days and then undergo reinspection. No ship coming from a port where yellow fever was raging was allowed to come in for forty days.

The second part of his program was more ingenious, it being the solution to two problems at once. Butler explained the second prong of his attack this way:

New Orleans, June 4, 1862.

To the Military Commandant and City Council of New Orleans:

General Shepley and Gentlemen:—Painful necessity

compels some action in relation to the unemployed and starving poor of New Orleans. Men willing to labor cannot get work by which to support themselves and families, and are suffering for food.

Because of the sins of their betrayers, a worse than the primal curse seems to have fallen upon them: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return unto the ground."

The condition of the streets of the city calls for the promptest action for a greater cleanliness and more perfect sanitary preparations.

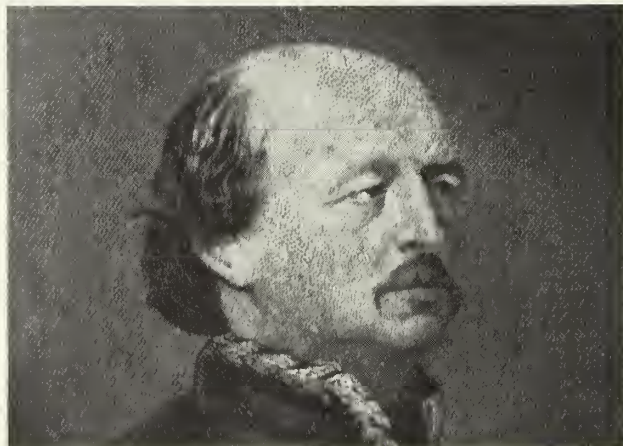
To relieve, as far as I may be able to do, both difficulties, I propose to the city government as follows:

... The city shall employ upon the streets, squares, and unoccupied lands in the city, a force of men, with proper implements, and under competent direction, to the number of two thousand, for at least thirty working days, in putting those places in such condition as, with the blessing of Providence, shall insure the health as well of the citizens as of the troops.

The necessities of military operations will detain in the city a larger number of those who commonly leave it during the summer, especially women and children, than are usually resident here during the hot months. Their health must be cared for by you; I will care for my troops. The miasma which sickens the one will harm the other. The epidemic so earnestly prayed for by the wicked will hardly sweep away the strong man, although he may be armed, and leave the weaker woman and child untouched.

Thus General Butler planned his clean-up campaign in New Orleans as a form of poverty relief. He would put men, unable to find work in this commercial city brought to stagnation by war and blockade, on public-works jobs provided by the government. There is a consistent strand in Butler's otherwise varied career leading from his serving as counsel for the factory girls in Lowell, Massachusetts to his public-works program in New Orleans and perhaps even to his later association with the Greenback party.

"To do these things required much money," Butler pointed out needlessly. "The poor had to be fed, the streets had to be cleaned, the protection from yellow fever had to be made sure, and able-bodied, idle men had to have employment to keep them from mischief and maintain their families. There was power enough to do all this, but in what manner could it be paid?" He also had to find funds to support the Charity Hospital and other hospitals in the city.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Benjamin Franklin Butler (1818-1893), though he came from a family of modest economic circumstances, graduated from college and became a lawyer. He acquired considerable wealth through his law practice, but he was always identified as a friend of labor and the Catholic immigrants in his home State of Massachusetts. Butler's rule of New Orleans was but one in a series of controversial events in his political life, which saw him move from the Democratic to the Republican party and eventually become a candidate of the Greenback party before returning to Democratic ranks in 1879.

Butler's solution—embodied in Order No. 55 which ultimately occasioned the letter to Lincoln reprinted in this *Lincoln Lore*—he explained this way in *Butler's Book*:

I had the documents to show me that not long before we came, there had been a "city defence fund" committee organized to receive subscriptions and issue bonds to the amount of a million dollars to the subscribers to that fund, which bonds were to bear quite a rate of interest. These subscriptions had been paid.

A large portion of them were those of rich foreign-born men, some of whom had taken the oath of allegiance to the United States, but almost all of whom had taken the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. And there was another class of citizens, cotton planters, who had issued a paper advising that no cotton should be brought to the city as a matter of merchandise.

I assumed that I should need for my expenditure a sum between \$500,000 and \$700,000, and I ordered that an assessment equal to one half of the subscriptions to the "fund," and a sum equal to one hundred dollars for each of the offenders of the other class should be paid to my financial agent forthwith, with which to pay for this work that had been and was being done. I held that these men had made the expenditure necessary and therefore these men should pay for it. That order, it is needless to say, was enforced, and it is also needless to say, was the cause of protests of the foreign consuls in behalf of "neutral" forsworn rebels.

Butler justified his means of funding in several ways. One justification came from the standpoint of retributive justice: "There seemed to me no such fit subjects for . . . taxation as the cotton brokers who had brought the distress upon the city, by thus paralyzing commerce, and the subscribers to this loan, who had money to invest for purposes of war, so advertised and known as above described." It had been unofficial Confederate diplomatic policy to bring European intervention on the side of the South by cutting off Europe's cotton supplies, forcing European nations to end the Civil War in order to re-

store the flow of "King Cotton" to their textile mills. The cotton factors were thus aiding the cause of Southern independence by requesting that planters not bring their cotton to the city for export to Europe. This also served to paralyze trade and induce the economic depression in the city Butler was attempting to relieve.

To the protests of foreign ministers that he was levying a tax upon foreigners, Butler replied that much of the economic relief—perhaps as much as ninety per cent—went to poor foreigners in New Orleans. Moreover, Butler complained, foreigners played both ends against the middle by taking oaths of allegiance to the Confederacy and then claiming neutrality when United States authorities assumed command. Some apparently claimed they subscribed funds merely as an investment for the sake of the profit to be derived from the venture rather than for the political purpose of aiding the Confederacy. Replied Butler: ". . . is the profitableness of the investment to be permitted to be alleged as a sufficient apology for aiding the rebellion . . . ?" Throughout the discussion in *Butler's Book*, the tone of the remarks is that the foreign residents of New Orleans were hypocrites and secessionist sympathizers.

Finally, there was the obvious point of Butler's welfare measures: "Further, in order to have a contribution effective, it must be upon those who have wealth to answer it." If the poor were starving, only the rich could afford relief.

Butler seems not to have known what happened in New Orleans after he was relieved as commander of the Department of the Gulf by General Nathaniel P. Banks in December, 1862. Order No. 55 was sustained by Butler's superiors on December 9, 1862, on which date he renewed the assessment, the fund having been exhausted. However, as Butler related it,

I was relieved by General Banks six days after. As the time this assessment was to be paid was at the expiration of seven days [i.e., December 16], and I was relieved before that time, of course nobody paid the assessment according to the order. Within thirty days General Banks found himself under the necessity of renewing the order and did so. But nobody paid the slightest attention to it and nobody paid anything afterwards on that order, and it stands to-day unrepealed, uncanceled, and unexecuted. But the necessities of the poor remained the same, and if they were relieved it must have been from some other source.

If the letter from Mr. Touro is correct, then Butler was in error on this point, for the letter asserts the assessment was made and paid at least two times after Butler's departure from New Orleans. Still, Butler's own testimony in *Butler's Book* is rarely heard, though we often hear of the "Beast," as he was called by Southerners. William B. Hesseltine's claim, for example, that Butler "soon had the destitute poor, white and black, of the city working on public works and supported by the fines extracted from the Secessionists" completely ignores the account in *Butler's Book*. General Butler apparently budgeted "fifty thousand dollars a month" to feed "the poor whites of New Orleans." He fed "the negroes at a cost" which he "never knew, because they received their provisions from the supplies of the soldiers." Thus despite his reputation as a daring humanitarian (gained by claiming that Negroes who escaped to his lines were "contraband of war" not to be returned to their masters), Butler claimed he used the controversial fund provided for in Order No. 55 to feed only the white citizens of New Orleans. Historians have been quick to listen to Butler's detractors, but have hardly heeded his own testimony at all. *Butler's Book* reveals a man engaged in pioneering efforts in public health and in relief through public works who is less well known than the "Beast." Also lost in the recriminations over Butler's harshness or corruption is the fact that his reputation for dealing with civilians and escaped slaves was already well established before Lincoln appointed him head of the Department of the Gulf with the responsibility of ruling New Orleans.

Touro's letter bears more on the administration of Butler's successors (notably, it does not protest the pay-



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Nathaniel Prentiss Banks (1816-1894) was, like Benjamin Butler, a one-time Massachusetts Democrat, and not a professional soldier. He succeeded Butler as commander in New Orleans in December, 1862, and at first initiated a policy apparently meant to be more moderate than Butler's. After a brief period Banks returned to Butler's policies, including taxation of supporters of the Confederacy to provide relief for the poor of the city. In 1864, Banks initiated elections for Louisiana State offices and for a constitutional convention and lobbied unsuccessfully in Washington for acceptance of this government as the legal government of Louisiana. Unlike Butler, Banks went from the Democratic party to the Republican party via the anti-Catholic and anti-foreign Know-Nothing or American party. Like Butler, Banks would eventually return to Democratic ranks.

ment made under Butler's original order) and on the legal effect of Abraham Lincoln's proclamation of amnesty than on Butler's own administration. Despite Butler's belief that the assessment was not collected after his departure, this letter and others indicate that Order No. 55 was renewed. Historians seem to be in doubt, however, about how much was actually collected.

It is also true that Major-General Hurlbut's (his name was misspelled by Mr. Touro) General Order No. 144 can be found in the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*. This order renewed Butler's assessment against those who had subscribed to the committee of safety. Attached to the order was a schedule of names of contributors, the amount they contributed to aid the defense of New Orleans before the Federal take-over, and the amount they were assessed for the fund for the relief of the poor (the latter was a certain percentage of the former). Gone from Hurlbut's order, however, was the schedule of names of cotton factors who requested planters not to bring their cotton to New Orleans. There is no explanation given in the order for the exclusion of this group, but doubtless the ability of the cotton factors to pay anything was much diminished by 1864 because of the strangulation of commerce caused by the naval blockade and the Federal occupation of New Orleans. It would no longer have been a case of taxing those ablest to pay. At the time, Butler had been replaced by General Banks, but Banks was temporarily away from the Department and General Hurlbut had been left in command by Banks. The name Giquel appears in the schedule of contributors to the committee of safety in both General Orders No. 55 and No. 144. It appears as "Giquel and Jamison," a firm, apparently, which had contributed \$7,500 to the committee of safety and which was assessed \$1,875 for the poor-relief fund. The name of John Touro appears once in Roy P. Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953). Governor Michael Hahn of Louisiana sent a letter to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton on August 9, 1864. This letter introduced Touro, who was presenting claims for supplies taken from New Orleans citizens by the United States Army. Lincoln begged off dealing with the problem on August 12. Apparently Touro stayed around Washington to press other claims made by Louisiana citizens.

The claim referred to in the letter to Lincoln acquired by the Library and Museum is based on the contention that taking the oath of amnesty exempted residents of former Confederate territory from Federal martial law and thus from Hurlbut's Order No. 144. Lincoln's Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction of December 8, 1863 offered a pardon to participants in rebellion and restoration of their property rights (with the exception of slave property) if they subscribed to an oath to the Constitution and the Union. They also had to swear to obey Congressional acts and Presidential proclamations affecting slaves. Seemingly, this would exempt oath-takers from arbitrary martial law, but since Congress controlled the recognition of their own membership, a State could gain no recognition in Congress without Congress's approval. The question of what laws governing property the oath-taker *would* be under was simply a chaos. The United States Constitution did not anticipate a civil war, and the question of what conditions had to be met for a state to resume its normal relations with the federal government would vex the President and Congress until 1877. The outcome of this petition (it is not endorsed by Lincoln) is as yet unknown, and the fate of Mr. Giquel and Touro's other petitioners was just one part of the complex legal and political problems that constituted the era of Reconstruction.

A FURTHER NOTE

ON WHITING'S WAR POWERS

In the May, 1973 issue of *Lincoln Lore* (Number 1623), space did not permit discussion of two questions that bear on the article entitled "I like Mr. Whiting very much..." The first is a problem suggested by David Donald in his article "Abraham Lincoln: Whig in the White House" (in Donald's *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era* [New York: Random House,

1956]). Donald contends that Lincoln's rather expansive view of the war powers of the President of the United States was a legacy of his twenty-year identification with the Whig party in politics. His arguments rests on two points, both of which are relevant to the previous discussion of Lincoln and Solicitor Whiting: (1) Whiting was a former Whig, and (2) the President's power to abolish slavery as a war measure had been enunciated by John Quincy Adams, who had been an opponent of Andrew Jackson and the Democratic party.

Whereas a powerful case can be made for the influence of the Whig party's ideology on Lincoln's economic ideas, Donald's case for its influence on Lincoln's constitutional view of the war powers of the executive is unconvincing. If William Whiting was a former Whig, so also was Lincoln's Attorney General, Edward Bates of Missouri. Bates was as persistent a Whig as Lincoln, remaining impervious to the beckoning of the new Republican party at least as late as 1856, when he served as president of the Whig national convention held in Baltimore. Yet his constitutional views fell a good deal short of Whiting's and Lincoln's. Bates differed with Lincoln on the question of admitting West Virginia to the Union, equating its removal from Virginia as itself a form of secession. Although he at first upheld the President's suspension of *habeas corpus*, by 1863 he feared "a general and growing disposition of the military, wherever stationed, to engross all power." Likewise, Bates never questioned the President's power to emancipate slaves as a war measure, but the following observation made by Bates during the war was precisely opposite in spirit to William Whiting's work:

Surely Cicero was right when he said that "in every Civil war, Success is dangerous, because it is sure to beget arrogance and a disregard of the laws of the Government—" (i.e. the Constitution) [.]

These men, flattered with a little success, have opened up to themselves a boundless source [sic] of power. When the constitution fails them, they have only to say "this is a time of war—and war gives all needed powers"!

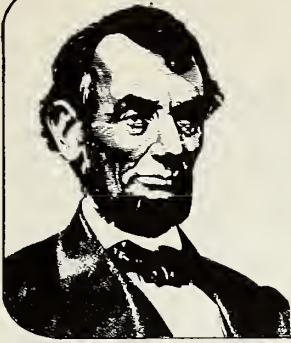
I am afraid that this Congress is becoming perfectly Radical and revolutionary.

Whiggery by no means led Bates to Whiting's views.

Moreover, as Donald himself admits, John Quincy Adams was not a Whig. When he was elected to Congress in 1831 and returned for eight successive terms, former President Adams ran without specific support from any party in Massachusetts.

More illuminating is some of the information provided by Donald W. Riddle's study of Lincoln's single term in the House of Representatives (*Congressman Abraham Lincoln* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957]). While serving in Congress, Lincoln had a chance to express an opinion on two of the precedents cited by William Whiting as proof that war even in the United States had meant extraordinary governmental powers over property in slaves.

Lincoln acted differently in each case. When a private bill came up to provide compensation to the owner of a slave abducted by the British during the War of 1812, Lincoln voted for it. Later a bill was proposed to pay compensation to the heirs of one Antonio Pacheco. Pacheco's slave had been hired by the United States Army as a guide and interpreter in the interminable Seminole wars. The slave was captured by the Indians. When Pacheco claimed him later, the Army said that the slave had cooperated with the Indians after he was captured by them and that therefore he must be transported out of the state with the vanquished Indians. Pacheco then sought compensation for the loss of his slave. Anti-slavery Congressmen contended that no compensation should be voted on the grounds that there was no such thing as property in another man. Lincoln voted that payment should not be made to Pacheco, voting with the majority and taking the floor to make sure his vote was properly recorded. Later the bill was reconsidered. Lincoln voted against the move to reconsider, and he voted against the bill again when it was reconsidered (although this time he was in the minority).



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PEYTON McCrARY ON LINCOLN'S LOUISIANA EXPERIMENT: A REVIEW

The capture of New Orleans by Commodore David Glasgow Farragut on April 25, 1862 gave the North a pleasing taste of victory and gave the Lincoln administration an opportunity to test the depths of Confederate sentiment in a state of the lower South. To judge from the fact that Federal troops occupied the state for fifteen years thereafter, one would have to say that the sentiment ran very deep indeed. Professor Peyton McCrary's book, *Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction: The Louisiana Experiment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) agrees that the sentiment was strong but argues that the opportunity to use white Southern dissidents and Negroes as a base upon which to build a viable party to revolutionize that sentiment was missed. He lays most of the blame for missing the opportunity on General Nathaniel P. Banks and not on the man who chose him to reconstruct Louisiana, Abraham Lincoln.

Chapter VI is the crucial one for Lincoln students. Reconstructing Louisiana would be no more difficult than "the passage of a dog law in Massachusetts," General Nathaniel P. Banks, military commander of the Department of the Gulf, informed President Lincoln in one of the extreme political understatements of American history. Anxious for speedy action towards reconstruction in occupied Louisiana, disgusted with the slow progress to date, and impressed with Bank's extravagant promises of quick results, Lincoln wrote the general on Christmas Eve, 1863, to make him "master of all" in giving "us a free-state reorganization of Louisiana in the shortest possible time." No longer would jurisdictional disputes between the military governor, George F. Shepley, and the commander of the military district, Banks,

slow the reconstruction process. Lincoln could not have been much impressed, either, with the work of the local radical white movement for reconstruction led by the Free State General Committee. They had been fumbling along with Shepley to organize elections for a constitutional convention in Louisiana, and Banks would presumably be their master

too. However, Lincoln did state carefully that Banks was not "to throw away available work already done for reconstruction," and the Free State Committee had been doing much of that work.

The immediate background of Lincoln's letter to Banks was the visit to Washington of two Louisiana conservatives, Thomas Cottman and James Riddell. These men led a movement opposed to Negro suffrage, and they argued that occupied Louisiana would likely be willing to return to the Union under the provisions of the President's recent Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction (December 8, 1863) and thus recognize emancipation — if "they could come back to civil government under their [existing] constitution and laws." In other words, they feared the movement of the Free State Committee, which was beginning to show itself willing to cooperate with elite Negro groups in Louisiana, to draw up a new state constitution before electing a new government for the state and presenting the state to Congress for readmission to the Union. The old state constitution, of course, restricted voting to whites only. They told Lincoln that Louisiana's citizens would not accept a government reconstructed with Negro votes. The day before Lincoln wrote his letter giving Banks exclusive control of the situation, Riddell wrote the general to tell him that the President would soon send a letter authorizing him to take control.



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FIGURE 1. General Nathaniel P. Banks.



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FIGURE 2. Lincoln is depicted as the impossible idealist Don Quixote in this political cartoon by the brilliant Copperhead etcher, Adalbert Johann Volck. Benjamin F. Butler makes an excellent Sancho Panza, ironically rooting Lincoln's idealism in the earthy character of this cockeyed general reputed to have stolen silverware from the mansions of occupied New Orleans (note the knife stuck in his belt). Butler, who incurred Volck's talented wrath when he commanded Federal forces in the cartoonist's beloved Maryland, went on to command Federal forces in occupied New Orleans and to become a favorite target of Volck's savage wit. The artist wrote and illustrated the *Life and Adventures of B. F. B. (Bombastes Furioso Buncombe)*, *The Warrior, Sage and Philanthropist*, *A Christmas Story* in 1862 and reissued it with slight changes in 1868 as *The American Cyclops*, *The Hero of New Orleans and Spoiler of Silver Spoons*. Butler's sensational actions in New Orleans did much to focus national attention on events in Louisiana. This fine example of Volck's work is a recent acquisition of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum and joins a rare set of his pro-Confederate etchings.

General Banks then lied to Lincoln, or at least neglected to tell him the whole truth. On December 30, 1863, he told the President that his own scheme — which, by design or by coincidence, was like the scheme suggested by Riddell and Cottman — would work faster than that of the Free State Committee. Banks said that the election called for by that Committee could not be held until March; he did not tell him that they were calling for elections on January 25th. McCrary considers this deception important for explaining Lincoln's shift in reconstruction policy for Louisiana.

McCrary points out still another important change in the Louisiana situation. George Denison, a Treasury agent in New Orleans appointed by Salmon P. Chase, had given up his opposition to Banks's policies in the state by the time Lincoln turned the Louisiana operation over to Banks. The general could now count on the cooperation of this powerful Treasury Department presence in the state, but the price of Denison's support — as an intermediary between Denison and Banks, B. Rush Plumly, told Chase — had been a promise by Banks to deliver reconstructed Louisiana's delegates to the Republican Presidential nominating convention in 1864 to Chase rather than President Lincoln. Of all this, of course, Lincoln was profoundly ignorant, as all historians have been since. Denison personally carried Banks's deceptive letter to Lincoln in Washington.

McCrary's is certainly the best account of the origins of reconstruction policy in Louisiana in 1863-1864, but, even so,

its meaning is not as clear as McCrary seems to think it is. To him it seems that Banks had engineered a "coup," altering the radical direction of Louisiana politics under the Free State Committee's leadership and forcing Lincoln to move in a more moderate direction led by General Banks. McCrary attributes the general's motivation to political ambition. An outsider could more quickly organize a few candidates for a state government than he could a hundred delegates for a constitutional convention, and a speedy restoration of the state would be a political achievement helpful to his dark-horse chances for a Presidential nomination in 1864. Moreover, McCrary claims, "Banks' ideological differences with the radicals centered on the question of Negro suffrage, which he feared would antagonize many potential supporters of the free state movement." Lincoln's "motivation . . . in throwing power into the general's hands" is "not entirely clear" to McCrary, but he stresses that "Banks had deceived him about the situation: the President did not know that the radicals were ready to hold an election within a month." On the other hand, McCrary admits, "Lincoln may have shared the general's reluctance to countenance Negro suffrage in Louisiana for fear of antagonizing conservative opinion."

McCrary makes a great advance over the existing literature on the subject, but he somewhat overstates his case. He can prove "deception" — a powerful word in swaying the reader's sentiments — only in the case of the timing of Banks's election as opposed to that called for by the Free State Committee. Yet that deception occurred *after* Lincoln had given control to Banks on the 24th; Banks's letter about election dates was dated the 30th. Otherwise, Banks's campaign to secure control of Louisiana politics had been based on oversanguine predictions and a braggart's inflation of his own abilities, but the election dates provide the crucial case for deception — and they could have nothing to do with Lincoln's decision to make Banks "master of all."

The true origins of Lincoln's shift to Banks in Louisiana lay in the visit of Cottman and Riddell. The latter's letter of December 23, 1863 accurately predicted what Lincoln's letter of December 24, 1863 would do: give the authority to Banks. The Louisiana conservatives had also given the President an earful of arguments proving that Louisiana would never swallow a reconstruction brought about even in part by Negro votes. Nor does it seem fair to call Banks's view that Negro suffrage would block acceptance of any new Louisiana government an "ideological" difference from the Free State Committee. It was a tactical one, a practical one, a question of means rather than of ends. The use of the word "ideological," however, tends to conjure up in the reader's mind a frothing-mouthed ideologue of racial hatred.

There can be no blinking this chronology away, and it is ironic that so gifted a narrative historian would do so. It is especially ironic because McCrary's conclusion stresses the importance of the "precise chronology of events" in December of 1863. To be sure, much of the chronology points to the accuracy of McCrary's conclusions, and it is only fair to quote the fuller chronology here:

A major turning point in wartime reconstruction occurred in December 1863, when General Banks decided to seize control of the reorganization of civil government in Louisiana. . . . The general asked Lincoln to grant him full authority over reconstruction on December 6, before learning of the President's ten-percent proclamation — but after Durant [leader of the Free State Committee] had openly advocated the limited enfranchisement of blacks. Lincoln's proclamation was delivered to Congress, moreover, before he received Banks' request; nothing in the document necessitated the substitution of Banks' new plan for a continuation of the existing program of reorganizing civil government through a constitutional convention. The sole issue involved was Lincoln's impatience with the slow pace of voter registration, which Banks attributed to the incompetence of Shepley and Attorney General Durant. In none of his correspondence with the President did Banks mention the controversial issue of Negro suffrage; nor did Lincoln comment on the question when authorizing the general to take charge of reconstruction, even though representatives of the sugar planters had just told him in his White House office that Durant was already registering the free men of color. The President's instructions to Banks on December 24 did not preclude the adoption of Negro suffrage; in fact, they suggested that the general continue to work with the leaders of the Union Association. It was Banks' idea to throw down

the gauntlet to the New Orleans radicals and offer the full weight of military influence and patronage to the moderate minority within the Union Association.

Making Banks the active source of change in policy from radical to moderate is a bit less convincing than McCrary's interesting proof that Lincoln did not shift to Banks in order to keep Louisiana from falling into the hands of radicals who would support Chase for the Presidency. Ironically, it was Chase's man Denison, who carried Banks's deceptive letter to Lincoln, and Denison's willingness to work with Banks to get Louisiana's delegates for Chase surely discredits the old view of Lincoln's shift in Louisiana as a shift away from Chase. In fact, one of McCrary's most valuable contributions is to show the unity of the Free State movement before Banks took over; Banks's policies created a factional split in 1864.

McCrary's emphasis on the passage in Lincoln's letter to Banks which cautioned him against throwing away existing work towards reconstruction seems very proper. When Denison brought Banks's letter to Lincoln, what a vision of unity in Louisiana Lincoln must have seen!

McCrary is at his best in showing that Andrew Johnson, when he assumed the Presidency after Lincoln's assassination, completely reversed the policies of his predecessor. Lincoln had created a moderate regime led by Banks's favorite, Governor Michael Hahn. When Hahn resigned to run for the United States Senate, Madison Wells assumed the office. He very quickly executed a conservative coup, replacing the mayor of New Orleans with a man who in turn replaced most of the local officials with conservatives and returning Confederate veterans. Wells himself appointed former Confederate Major Paul Théard as judge and filled other offices with conservatives, planters, and ex-Confederates. Even General Beauregard was expecting an appointment. Banks returned from Washington as military commander and quick-

ly confronted Wells. The Governor asked President Johnson to give him Banks's powers. Banks halted Wells's removals, replacing the new mayor of New Orleans with a former captain of a Negro regiment. Wells demanded that the President intervene, and on May 17, 1865, Johnson deprived Banks of command. Johnson sustained Wells's reorganization of the state completely. Lincoln may have failed to bring about a revolution in Louisiana politics and society, but Andrew Johnson certainly brought about a counterrevolution against the moderate Banks-Lincoln government. McCrary states it very well: "When Andrew Johnson assumed the presidency in 1865 he pursued a reconstruction policy antithetical to that of his predecessor, if viewed in terms of its impact on the party system rather than in light of superficial constitutional similarities." Of this there can be no doubt.

Lincoln students will also find in McCrary's book the best treatment in print of Lincoln's last speech. Delivered from the torchlit balcony of the White House on the night of April 11, 1865, Lincoln's speech, McCrary says, "made a less favorable impression when delivered than when read in the morning newspaper." The speech dealt "almost exclusively with events in Louisiana." Significantly, Lincoln had asked Senator Charles Sumner, radical critic of his Louisiana policies, to appear with him on the balcony while he gave the speech. Sumner declined, but McCrary notes acutely that Lincoln did not ask Banks to appear, though Banks was in town and had been lobbying for Lincoln's Louisiana government for months. Lincoln defended his commitment to the moderate government of Michael Hahn, "but as bad promises are better broken than kept," he said fairly, "I shall treat this as a bad promise, and break it, whenever I shall be convinced that keeping it is adverse to the public interest." He concluded with those mysterious words which have puzzled and titillated historians for over a hundred years: "... it may be my duty to make some new announcement to the people of the South." McCrary's view is that Lincoln was most likely to announce that he would institute a more radical reconstruction policy.

There are many insights, too, that are tangential to the Lincoln theme. I know no better treatment, for example, of General Benjamin F. Butler's decision to use Negro troops in Louisiana. In the spring and summer of 1862, General Butler was embroiled in a feud with General John W. Phelps over contraband Negroes in occupied Louisiana. Picturing himself in his autobiography as a radical in advance of his times on this question, Butler has recently been attacked as a conservative opponent of Phelps's schemes to arm free Negroes in Louisiana. McCrary shows that Butler was an opportunist and that the real impetus to arm free Negroes in Louisiana came from the administration to a reflective and vacillating General Butler, who was neither radical nor conservative in this instance. Butler acted the part of the good soldier awaiting orders. The "President of the United States alone," he told Phelps, "has the authority to employ Africans in arms as part of the military forces." Without actually praising Phelps's attempts to arm Louisiana Negroes, Lincoln answered complaints from white Louisianans by telling them they could rid themselves of Phelps by making the state loyal to the Union again. Significantly, he entrusted responses to Butler on the question to Salmon Chase, who advocated arming Negroes. On July 31, 1862, Chase told Butler, "I have heard intimations from the President that it may possibly become necessary, ... to convert the heavy black population ... into defenders." Butler had been ambivalent before. He struggled with Phelps because of orders from superiors and not because of personal disapproval of radical policies. His own views were ambivalent but thoughtful. Phelps seemed at times to be stirring up trouble among the blacks. Butler expressed fear of "a negro insurrection," but commented blandly: "... the negroes are getting saucy and troublesome, and who blames them?" Later he would make a similar remark to his wife: "We have danger here of an negro insurrection. I hardly know whether to wish it or fear it most." George Denison told Chase that Butler's opposition to Phelps "was not a matter of principle." Butler simply "wanted the credit of doing it himself, and in his own way."

To focus on sections of the book of most interest to Lincoln students is to give an unbalanced picture of McCrary's work. It is masterful in its sweep. The early chapter on Louisiana before the Union occupation is a model of social and political landscape-painting. He is able to benefit from the statistical tools of the modern political historian, but his extremely skill-



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FIGURE 3. General P. G. T. Beauregard.

ful use of printed and manuscript sources — especially his sensitive use of articulate diaries — allows him to render his findings in a most fluent and readable prose. He understands the nature of political parties. Above all, he is steeped in knowledge of Louisiana history.

McCrary's thesis, which stresses the potential for social change in Louisiana offered by the Federal army, is sustained by his finely textured narrative of Louisiana history only in part. Here is his fullest statement of the case:

In terms of political survival, then, "Mr. Lincoln's model of reconstruction" proved a failure. Indeed, as long as President Lincoln stuck to the moderate strategy of party building employed by General Banks, it is difficult to see how it could have been otherwise. The general's assumption that a conciliatory approach would win the support of a majority of the white population contradicted the elemental political arithmetic of Louisiana and defied what might be called the central rule of any civil war: the irreconcilability of insurgents and incumbents. The polarization between left and right that leads to the outbreak of a revolutionary civil war is not "resolved" by the conclusion of armed struggle, except to the degree that the victors are able to force their ideological will upon the losers through the application of governmental power. . . .

The political dynamics of the American Civil War raised almost insurmountable obstacles in the path of the moderate reconstruction policy with which Lincoln was associated. Without suggesting that the revolutionary strategy advocated by men like Wendell Phillips or Charles Sumner would have achieved all their hopes for racial justice and Republican rule in the postwar South, it does seem to be true that the radicals advocated a more practical approach than General Banks.

McCrary is correct in asserting that wartime hatreds could not end with Northern victory in 1865, and he is right, too, to think that civil war permitted revolutionary policies unthinkable to American politicians in peacetime. Emancipation itself was one. Finally, it is true that political arithmetic in the Southern states required either black voting, military occupation, or control by ex-Confederates when the war was over.

Lincoln was a good student of political arithmetic. As G.S. Boritt has shown, when Lincoln followed policies at odds with the numerical facts of life (in advocating colonization, for example), he was not paying close attention to the problem at hand. Lincoln avoided the arithmetic of colonization as a psychological necessity, but his defiance of the arithmetic of loyalty in the South was a function of another problem. "Reconstruction was the crucial question of national politics — at least as a theoretical issue — from the moment the states of the lower South seceded from the Union," McCrary says, and this is probably the cardinal point of the new students of reconstruction policy in the Civil War. However, it is not true. The crucial question was winning the war. Though it is proper to see continuities in the hatreds of the Civil War and Reconstruction periods, the discontinuities in terms of constitutional possibility and central political concern are important as well.

Lincoln was thinking of winning the war. He thought Federal emancipation would help win it, though it was a peacetime impossibility. He thought Louisiana's political defection from the Confederate States of America would help win it too. He was less interested in Banks's policies than in Banks's speed in bringing Louisiana out of the Confederacy and into the Union. Banks thought much the same way. His "ideological" differences from the local radicals were often actually differences in estimates of what would get Louisiana out of the Confederacy fastest. Otherwise, he would not so clearly appear to be an opponent of Madison Wells in 1865. The political arithmetic of peacetime would face the constitutional conservatism of peacetime. The war was a revolutionary situation only for activities clearly related to war-making. That situation ended in 1865.

McCrary calls Banks's reasoning "curious" when the general told Lincoln that Louisiana would accept an emancipation forced on it by Banks but would never actually vote for emancipation if a radical constitutional convention offered a free constitution. "Their self-respect, their *amour propre*, will be appeased if they are not required to vote for or against it," Banks said. Curious this may be, but it is revolutionary logic, and it did recognize the grim political arithmetic of Louisiana's slave society.

It is not a small matter to argue with the thesis of a book, but in this case it by no means threatens the overall worth of the book. McCrary's is the definitive study of Lincoln's Louisiana policy, and it is an enormously informative work. There can be no quarrel with that.

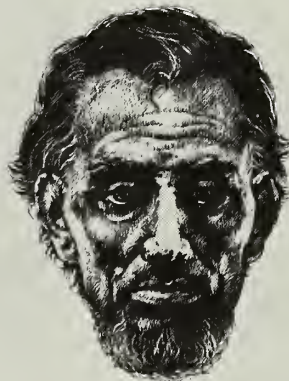
Happily, Princeton University Press served its capable author well. I detected only one typographical error (page 183). The editors allowed a couple of slips here and there: Oliver B. Morton on page 281 should be Oliver P. Morton, and Edwin Bates on page 288 should be Edward Bates. McCrary overuses the verb "demonstrate" and the phrase "on a _____ly basis." Otherwise, the writing and printing are immaculate. The footnotes are at the bottom of the page, and the editors allow long ones when necessary. Except for the inexplicable absence of a political map of Louisiana, it is a model of book-making, and McCrary's historical work deserves it.

Beginning with Herman Belz's superb book *Reconstructing the Union: Theory and Policy during the Civil War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), Lincoln students have come increasingly to question the older view that Lincoln would have been "soft" on the South. Most who have done so, however, have been forced to dance around the events in Louisiana, for it is a subject as complex as it is important. Historians need not avoid the subject any more. Peyton McCrary's beautifully written *Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction: The Louisiana Experiment* is a detailed but eminently understandable narrative of the history of early attempts to reconstruct Louisiana. The subject of the book is really Louisiana and not Abraham Lincoln, but the events are of such importance for the history of the Lincoln administration that no Lincoln library should be without a copy.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND RECONSTRUCTION

THE LOUISIANA EXPERIMENT

by Peyton McCrary



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FIGURE 4. Title page of the book.



Lincoln Lore

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The Confederacy As A Revolutionary Experience

by John David Smith

Lincoln doubtless faced overwhelming trials as President, but these pale in contrast to those confronted by his Southern rival, Jefferson Davis. Not only did Davis lead a revolution and establish a new nation, but he was called upon to fight a modern, total war, direct foreign policy, and maintain the spirit of Southerners for their cause. Regardless of whatever "natural" advantages the Confederates may have had — the revolutionary zeal of patriots for a new republic, the benefit of fighting a defensive war on native soil, the ability to draw on short interior lines of communication and supply — their opponents held the upper hand in those areas which really counted: men, materiel, industrial capacity, and organization.

What's more, Davis forged the Confederate nation from scratch. After secession he molded eleven sovereign state-republics, preindustrial in outlook and ever sensitive to their individual states' rights, into a confederacy, a federation with a surprisingly strong central government. Lincoln, on the other hand, inherited the reins of a country with years of experience in being a nation, and with all the administrative and industrial machinery to wage war. The early successes of the infant Confederacy were not lost on England's Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Gladstone. Speaking on the Confederacy at Newcastle in October, 1862, Gladstone's remarks were music to Davis's ears. In slightly more than a year and one-half, explained the Englishman, "Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either, they have made a nation."

Although few historians have articulated it in these terms, the central theme of Confederate historiography is, and always has been, Confederate nationalism. Soon after Appomattox, architects of the myth of the "Lost Cause," men like Edward Pollard, Alexander Stephens, and Davis

himself, offered explanations, denunciations, and rationalizations for Confederate defeat. Despite their self-serving chauvinism and partisanship, these early writers raised salient questions about the nature of the Confederate experiment. States' rights, centralization, faulty leadership, economic backwardness, state socialism, foreign recognition, disaffection on the homefront — these and innumerable other elements of Confederate strength and weakness have attracted later generations of trained historians. Writing in 1925, for example, historian Frank Lawrence Owsley charged that the Confederacy died from an overdose of states' rights theory. In reality, though, Owsley and numerous other students of the subject have all along been probing the Confederacy as a national experience.

In his new volume on the Confederacy, *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979 [*The New American Nation Series*]), Emory M. Thomas focuses squarely on Confederate nationhood. Thomas, a historian at the University of Georgia, is no neophyte to Confederate historiography. His first book, *The Confederate State of Richmond* (1971), is a pioneer work in Confederate urban history, a biography of the South's capital as an embattled city-state. In addition to numerous articles and a textbook on the Civil War, Thomas established his credentials as a historian of the Confederacy in 1971 with the publication of *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience*. This provocative speculative essay argues that the Southland underwent a dual revolution in its transformation from the Old South to the Confederate South. On one level the Confederacy symbolized an external "revolt against Yankee ways and a Yankee Union." But the revolution got out of hand and surpassed the goals of even the most rabid Southern revolutionaries. It ushered in an internal revolution, one which altered substantially the warp and woof of Southern life.



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FIGURE 1. The Great Seal of the Confederate States of America. In their political rhetoric Confederate Southerners honored the Founding Fathers. They perceived themselves as heirs to the revolutionary tradition of Washington and Jefferson. Confederates stressed their devotion to the true principles of American democracy, principles, they argued, which had been distorted under Northern misrule. The Confederate seal was designed by Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin and was adopted by the Confederate Congress in May, 1863. Significantly, it showed an equestrian portrait of George Washington (after the statue of Washington which surmounts the Capitol Square at Richmond), surrounded by a wreath of the South's agricultural staples — cotton, tobacco, sugar cane, corn, and wheat.

Thomas's latest book draws upon the concept of a dual revolution to explain Confederate nationalism from secession in 1860 and 1861 to submission in 1865. Like many historians of the South before him, Thomas emphasizes Southern distinctiveness, individualism, localism, and conservatism. He interprets secession as a means for Southerners "to define themselves as a people and to act out a national identity." "The essential fact of the Confederate experience," writes Thomas, "was that a sufficient number of white Southern Americans felt more Southern than American or, perhaps more accurately, that they were orthodox Americans and Northerners were apostates. Southern sectionalism became Southern nationalism and underwent trial by war."

One of the great ironies of Southern history is that secession — the region's external revolution — was essentially a conservative act. Southerners severed the Union and precipitated civil war in order to preserve and protect unique Southern institutions from encroachment. Although such root-and-branch radicals as Edmund Ruffin, Robert Barnwell Rhett, and William Lowndes Yancey had fueled the impulse for secession, the fire-eaters lost control of the Montgomery Convention and became mere "ornaments in the Confederate body politic." In their stead emerged moderate tacticians, men like Jefferson Davis and Alexander Stephens. These "sensible secessionists" envisioned themselves as nineteenth-century heirs to the revolutionary tradition of America's Founding Fathers.

The Confederacy's first heroes were George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Both men were good Southerners, but better yet, great Americans. Confederate Southerners wished not to repudiate their historic ties with the American experience. Rather, they celebrated the American past and decided only reluctantly to leave the Union. Dragging forth Washington and Jefferson as models, Confederate leaders believed that they too were justified in dissolving a Lockean compact by force.

Implicit in Thomas's analysis of the Confederate revolution are themes examined first by historian Bernard Bailyn in his authoritative research into the ideological origins of the American Revolution. Just as the revolutionaries of 1776 claimed that George III's colonial policies had perverted the spirit of the English constitution, the Confederate revolutionaries of 1861 charged that Northerners were destroying the principles of American representative government. The Confederates revolted *not* because of any dislike for the American Constitution, but because they held it so dear and detested the manner in which it was being distorted under Northern leadership. Significantly, in spite of their numerous allusions to the Founding Fathers, the Confederates never proposed America's only real precedent for confederation, the Articles of Confederation.

The Confederate Constitution illustrates well the essential conservatism of the South's external revolution. Whereas radical states' rightists favored a constitution designed to extend and intensify the slaveholders' ideology, "safe," moderate voices prevailed. The resulting document, the Confederate Constitution, was less Southern than American in origin. In most respects it resembled the very Federal Constitution which the secessionists had allegedly repudiated. Curiously, for example, the founding fathers of the new planters' republic refused to provide for the re-opening of the African slave trade. Thomas sees their conservatism as the Confederates' foremost characteristic. After secession, he writes, the "Confederates did not believe they needed to make new worlds; they were more than content with the world they already had." Their fundamental goal was not a break with the past, but rather the preservation of the Southern status quo.

War, however, altered drastically the entire nature of the Confederate experiment. After the attack upon Fort Sumter, Southern leaders no longer could speak in idealistic terms of a peaceful separation from the Union or of the Confederacy as simply an alternative nationality. War placed such strains on the fabric of the Confederacy that it occasioned the radical, internal revolt which ultimately rocked the Southern ship of state from its moorings.

The seeds of the internal Confederate revolution lay first in the outbreak of war, and second in the Confederate Constitution itself. The preamble to that document spoke both of the Confederate States acting in their "sovereign and independent character," and of a "permanent federal government." Delegates to the Confederate Constitutional Convention in Montgomery were not unaware of the potential dilemma

posed by a clash of state and Confederate rights. But rather than confront the problem, they "were satisfied to affirm state sovereignty in general terms and trust future generations to understand the meaning of the phrase." War, however, made the future the present. Designed to function during peacetime, the loose confederation of Southern states faltered terribly after the Confederacy's initial victory at Manassas.

Better than any previous historian, Thomas places the string of Confederate military setbacks and bungled campaigns, July, 1861-April, 1862, into the context of Confederate nationalism. During the early months of 1862 the Confederacy was clearly foundering as a result of its commitment to states' rights. "Southerners," writes Thomas, "had tried to act like a nation and had failed." During the first year of its existence as a nation, the Confederacy "had been an incarnation of the Old South, and as such the Old South had been tried and found wanting. Southerners found that Confederate national survival and rigid adherence to ante-bellum Southern ideology were mutually exclusive. The ante-bellum South could not metamorphose into the 'bellum' South without some fundamental alterations in its cherished way of life."

Thomas credits Jefferson Davis's positive and creative leadership with holding the key to Confederate survival for three additional years. With the support of the Confederate Congress, the President initiated a series of novel steps which transformed Davis's nation from a land steeped in the traditions of the Old South, to a revolutionary Confederate South, "distinct from the Souths that came before and after." During this second phase of the Southern revolt, the locus of Confederate power was in Richmond, no longer in eleven provincial state houses. The war against the Yankee invaders was conducted on a national level with strong centralized leadership provided by the President. Centralization, a sharp move away from states' rights and the ethos of the individual, became the Confederate way of life after 1862. Not only did the Davis regime come to control the South's military-agricultural-industrial complex, but it taxed, impressed supplies and laborers, and regulated foreign trade. Davis and the Confederate government even resorted to such infringements of personal liberties as the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, the power to declare martial law, and conscription. In 1865, as a last ditch effort to provide men for the South's decimated armies, Congress authorized the arming of blacks as soldiers. Their willingness to sacrifice slavery — the South's sacred cow and cornerstone of the region's socioeconomic system — revealed just how far Confederate nationalism had changed in the course of the war. Davis's all-consuming quest for Southern independence, Confederate self-determination, led the President to repudiate many of the principles upon which his new nation had been founded. Equally important, the Confederacy's internal revolt forced changes in almost every aspect of Southern national life.

One of the most dramatic areas of social change within the Confederacy was the impact of the war on the master-slave relationship. Thomas draws heavily on Eugene D. Genovese's view of slavery as a seigniorial institution. It was a system of interdependency whereby the slaveholder depended upon the bondsman for labor and deference, and the slave upon his owner for paternal mastery and support. This reciprocal relationship may or may not have been stable during peacetime, but it unquestionably experienced severe strains during the Confederate war. Several forces worked to weaken the bonds between master and slave and, in turn, undermined the peculiar institution.

First, many masters served in the Confederate Army and their absence led to an overall decrease in white hegemony on the South's farms and plantations. "Substitute masters" — planters' wives, the elderly, overseers, and children — failed to provide the slaves with paternal control and, consequently, commanded less obedience from the slaves. Wartime shortages, the impressment of slaves, the presence of Union armies in rural districts, and the dramatic increase in the number of slaves in Southern cities also upset the traditional role of the master.

The exceptional circumstances of war prevented the planter from assuming the role of provider and master of all situations. As masters acted less like masters, slaves acted less like slaves. Thomas presents excellent case studies of the subtle and complex ways in which slavery changed under the pressures of war. Throughout the South, bondsmen began to break their chains either by running away or by less overt

means such as disrespectful or impudent behavior. Incredible planters suffered considerable pain as they watched helplessly their social system, and their world, crumble about them. On the question of slave resistance, Thomas is extremely careful not to distort his evidence. Slaves, in fact *did* fight against the Confederacy by assisting runaways and Union troops. In doing so they were working out their own liberation. On the other hand, though, the slaves never rose *en masse* against their captors. Some even exhibited paternalism, guarded their masters, and thus reversed the master-slave roles.

Thomas's analysis of black Confederates is but one of numerous strengths in his excellent book. The volume is exhaustively researched and gracefully written. Its conclusions are in the main carefully reasoned. The footnotes bristle with references to the latest Confederate scholarship and the book's fifty-page bibliography is the most comprehensive enumeration of Confederate historiography in print. Only one recent major work, James L. Roark's *Masters Without Slaves* (New York, 1977), is omitted.

Thomas surveys all phases of the Confederate experience — administrative, cultural, diplomatic, and military — in such a judicious manner that none seems disproportionate in emphasis. This is especially true of his superb military accounts which are analytical and insightful, not mere rehashes of well-known Civil War engagements.

Perhaps Thomas's greatest strength as a historian is his uncanny ability to penetrate below the surface of complex issues and render balanced judgments. When analyzing the Confederacy's offensive-defensive strategy, for example, he makes the important point that the measure of Confederate nationhood was not achieving military victory, but rather avoiding defeat. Endurance was the key to Confederate nationalism. Every day the Confederate government survived offered undeniable proof of Southern independence and the success of Davis's conservative revolt.

He also offers just appraisals of two of the Confederacy's most maligned figures: Treasury Secretary Christopher G. Memminger and Davis himself. Both men were criticized in their day by disgruntled Confederate editors and politicians. Through the years historians have heaped much of the blame for Southern defeat on their shoulders. Thomas, however, is sympathetic in his treatment of them. Memminger, he argues, was a victim of Confederate circumstance. Although the South Carolinian favored a system of direct taxation from the start, his wishes were stymied by the overwhelming financial needs of the new nation and the innate conservatism of states' rights ideology. Cognizant of "the folly of unsupported paper money," Memminger tried repeatedly to retire large quantities of Southern paper currency and thereby arrest inflation. The task, concludes Thomas, simply was too great.

His positive assessment of Davis is in line with the recent biography of the man by Clement Eaton and with Paul D. Escott's important new book, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978). The new scholarship on Davis, while not eulogizing him as Hudson Strode did in his multi-volume biography, emphasizes the President's dedication, intelligence, and considerable flexibility. Although in many ways Davis remains a sphinx, historians no longer view him totally as an icy, snappish, doctrinaire constitutionalist.

What impresses Thomas most about Davis was the Mississippian's unflagging commitment to Confederate self-determination. Yet by February, 1865, when the Confederate Congress expressed its lack of confidence in his leadership,

the cause was already lost. "Davis," explains Thomas, "had tried to unify military command in himself, and although he had done so to a greater degree than his enemies, the Southern President had failed as a war leader, if only because he was losing the war." Even after Richmond had fallen, however, Davis refused to succumb to defeat and was ready to take to the hills to lead a guerilla war. The author notes that Davis's plan to fight till the end "reversed the normal pattern of guerilla operations and envisioned a transition from regular forces to partisans instead of the other way around." But an unconventional, irregular war proved unacceptable to a people who had already given so much of themselves in four years of strife. Southerners, concludes Thomas, were unprepared to offer "the ultimate sacrifice: that of themselves and their fundamental attachment to people and place."

Thomas undoubtedly is correct. There *were* limits to the lengths Southerners would go to win independence. But he merely speculates when he argues that the Confederates held a greater attachment to hearth and kin than did the Yankees. There simply is no way to prove or disprove an assertion such as this: "Confederates were conditioned to look upon land as the basis of wealth and social status. The culture of the Southern folk required a stable community of landholders." Could not the same sentences be applied to Northerners? Antebellum Northerners and Southerners worshiped land. In



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FIGURE 2. In his new book Emory M. Thomas sympathizes with the impossible fiscal problems faced by Confederate Treasury Secretaries Christopher G. Memminger and George Trenholm. This anti-Confederate cartoon appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, September 6, 1862, p. 576. It is clearly unsympathetic to Jefferson Davis's economic woes.

this respect, at least, the Southerner was an American, not a Southerner *sui generis*.

Thomas's thesis stems from David M. Potter's interpretation of Southern distinctiveness which appeared in the *Yale Review* almost twenty years ago. In "The Enigma of the South," Potter wrote that the South's "culture of the folk" was the region's most identifiable trait. According to Potter, historically "the relation between the land and the people remained more direct and more primal in the South than in other parts of the country." Potter, one of the most careful and distinguished historians of the South, advanced this thesis as one possible answer to a vexing enigma, not as dogma. Thomas, however, applies Potter's tentative explanation of Southernism uncritically and weds it to his own interpretation of Southern individualism.

Thomas's emphasis upon the individualism of Southerners and their unique characteristics leads him to make some provocative, though not completely defensible, arguments. Not only is this true of his treatment of the Confederacy's cultural and intellectual history, but of its military and economic history as well. The author's description of Pickett's assault on the Union center at Gettysburg is a good case in point. According to Thomas, the charge was "a gallant disaster. In a way it was the entire Confederate war in microcosm — a

gathering of clans instead of military organizations[,] led by an officer corps distinguished by its eccentricities, marching forth with bands playing and flags flying to take a gamble justified largely by the size of the stakes." Aside from the fact that Thomas fails to develop the ideas implicit in the terms "clans" and "eccentricities," might not similar words be used to describe the actions of Burnside and his Union troops at the Battle of Fredericksburg?

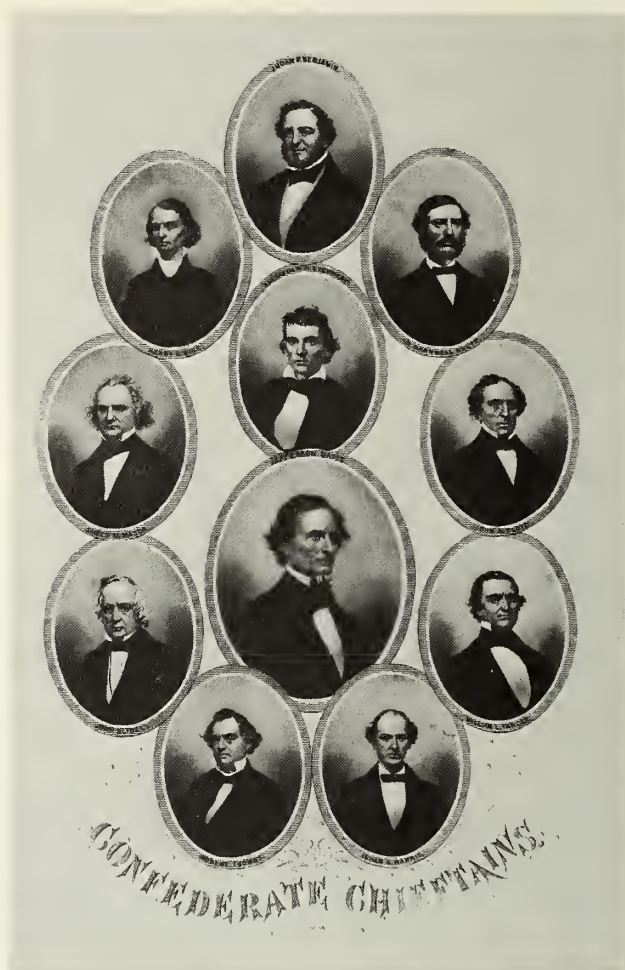
In another instance, an interesting analysis of the Confederacy's industrialists, Thomas espouses the distinctiveness of the South's captains of industry. Employing Antonio Gramsci's distinctions between types of intellectuals, Thomas argues that the leaders of the South's war industries "were hardly entrepreneurs whose acquisitive instincts fit the Yankee stereotype. On the contrary, the South's war industrialists tended to be 'traditional intellectuals' — school teachers, natural philosophers, and military scientists — as opposed to 'organic intellectuals' — industrial managers, mechanical engineers, and the like." His point would be far more convincing had Thomas examined the antebellum backgrounds of a large number of Confederate industrialists. Instead, he analyzed the postbellum careers of but five figures, too small a sample from which to draw overall conclusions. A real test of Thomas's hypothesis would have been the sort of collective biographical research conducted recently by Maury Klein into Northern Civil War industrialists.

Thomas's treatment of Confederate economic history raises additional questions as well. First, throughout his volume the author equates "preindustrial" with "precapitalist." Eugene



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FIGURE 3. In the waning days of the Civil War some Confederates proposed granting dictatorial powers to General Robert E. Lee. One of the South's most beloved figures, Lee joined the Confederate Army reluctantly, only after his native state, Virginia, had seceded.

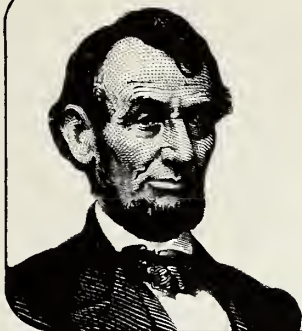


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FIGURE 4. A Mississippi planter, Jefferson Davis surrounded himself with fellow members of the Southern elite. In the process he alienated the South's plain folk.

D. Genovese's important scholarship notwithstanding, cannot a region such as the Old South be simultaneously agricultural and still capitalist? Given Thomas's use of these terms, the Old North — largely agricultural but more industrialized than the Old South — would be precapitalist too. Part of Thomas's problem is that Confederate agriculture (the same may be said for Confederate religion) has not received the careful attention from scholars which it deserves. Students, for example, must test his conclusion that "The Confederates sustained themselves industrially better than they did agriculturally and far better than they had any reason to expect in 1861." Much more also needs to be learned about the economic condition of the Southern masses during the war. Although Thomas does not neglect consideration of the ordinary Confederates, the nonslaveholding yeomen and urban dwellers, our knowledge of this majority of Southerners is thin. Paul D. Escott's new book is a major step in the right direction. According to Escott, President Davis's greatest blunder was his insensitivity to the economic problems of the South's plain folk. Limited by his states' rights critics and his upper class perspective, the Confederate chief executive proved unable "to create the internal unity and spirit essential for the growth of Confederate nationalism."

Despite these strictures, Thomas has produced the best book on the Confederacy to appear in years. This is no mean feat because such outstanding Southern historians as E. Merton Coulter, Clement Eaton, Charles P. Roland, and Frank E. Vandiver have contributed valuable monographs on the subject. Thomas brings a mastery of the sources and a keen analytical mind to the task. He has established himself as the foremost interpreter of the Confederacy, the South's national experience.



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BLAIR

The elder statesman is a familiar fixture on the Washington political scene today. In recent years, the names of Clark Clifford and Averell Harriman have often appeared in the headlines at times of national crisis. Abraham Lincoln's administration was one long crisis, and Francis Preston Blair was the Civil War's elder statesman. A relic of the Presidency of Andrew Jackson, Blair was influential because of his proximity to Washington, his blurred partisanship, his many political connections, and his age and experience. At last he has a modern biographer, Elbert B. Smith, who gives considerable stress to the Civil War years in *Francis Preston Blair* (New York: The Free Press, 1980).

Blair was seventy years old when the Civil War began. An architect of Jacksonian Democracy in his prime, he bitterly opposed the expansion of slavery and became an important founder of the Republican party when he was well into his sixties. His family and political relations formed a powerful network throughout the Union, especially in the Border States of Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky. One of his sons, Montgomery Blair, was Lincoln's Postmaster General. Francis Preston Blair, Jr., "Frank," flitted from politics to the battlefield and had sensational impact almost everywhere he went. Even Francis P. Blair's political enemies liked him personally. His family adored him and carried his political ideas everywhere they went. Like most elder statesmen, he played his largest role in foreign policy, initiating the abortive Hampton Roads Peace Conference. Confederates who would trust no other Republican trusted Blair.

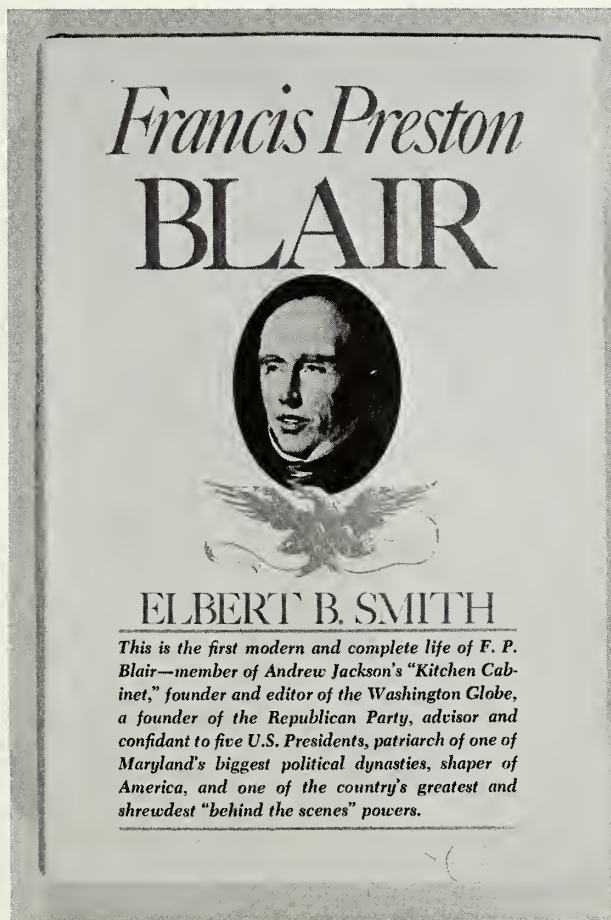
This is a competent and fair-minded biography of a man whose political ideas have not been popular in recent years. Like all elder statesmen, Blair's age made him in some respects a political troglodyte. A kindly slaveholder himself, Blair and his politically important family were ardent colonizationists long after the idea was a sociological, political, and economic absurdity. The

triumph of their conservative — even reactionary — constitutional ideas after Lincoln's death has not endeared the Blairs to modern historians. Eight years ago, when I asked a college professor what was the point of his lecture on Reconstruction in an American history survey course, he replied humorously, "To hell with Montgomery Blair." Smith's biography, which is particularly strong on the Blair family's inner workings, is a valuable corrective to this hostility absorbed by so many historians in recent years. It is most illuminating to discover how personally likable the old man was. Even the unbudging Charles Sumner never took personal exception to attacks on his political ideas by members of the Blair clan.

Nevertheless, the book's weaknesses must be the real focus

of this review. Despite competent research and readable prose, *Francis Preston Blair* is lacking in at least one important respect. Professor Smith, for all his ability to capture Blair the man, never quite delineates Blair the political thinker. To describe the political thought of many a politician / editor / wire-puller, would be a mistake. Opportunism and ad hoc political apologetics too often destroy anything systematic about their political thinking. With Blair, however, it is a serious mistake not to do so. He played a larger role in making Jacksonian political doctrine than Andrew Jackson himself did. When political problems arose, President Jackson always shouted, "Take it to Bla'ar." Despite his ability to land on his feet politically, despite his brave and clever moving with the times into the Republican party, and despite his steady personal loyalty to those he served, Blair's ideas had so ossified by the Civil War era that the most distinctive thing about him was his ideological quality. Even when his policies were up to date, the ideas underlying them were strangely archaic.

Blair was an ideologue, and his children inherited a penchant for grandiose ideas from him. It is virtually impossible, incidentally, to write about Francis Preston Blair. One



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FIGURE 1. Dust jacket of the new Blair biography.



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FIGURE 2. French troops in Mexico worried Blair but did not faze Lincoln.

must always write about the Blairs. Smith does this without really admitting that he does, probably because the only other existing work on the subject, William Ernest Smith's *The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics*, did exactly the same thing in 1933. One is immediately attracted to Elbert B. Smith's *Francis Preston Blair* because it promises to sort one member of that clan out, but, in fact, the modern Smith cannot do it either. When one finishes the new book, one still thinks of the Blairs' political ideas, not Montgomery's, not Frank's, and not the patriarch's particular ideas.

These ideas were all important, and they are all too sketchily delineated in Professor Smith's book. What Smith has failed to describe is the tendency among the Blairs to think always in systematic, gigantic, almost cosmic geopolitical terms. Among American politicians this trait has often been lacking, and it is a serious error for a biographer of such a rare thinker to ignore it.

To end the Civil War in 1865, Blair concocted a scheme to fight France in Mexico. This was the idea behind the Hamp-

ton Roads Peace Conference, and it is common knowledge. There are other clues in Smith's book that the Blairs always painted their political ideas on a grand canvas. The Blairs were not deeply troubled by the policy of emancipation. As Francis P. Blair explained to a Maryland friend as early as April 9, 1862:

You seem dissatisfied over abolition. All practical men are now sensible that slavery so affects the people whether it ought to do so or not as to make it a terrible institution to our race. They see that it imbues a brother's hand in a brother's blood, and invites foreign despots to plant monarchies on our continent. With this result before us, the only enquiry should be how to get rid of an institution which produces such miseries.

Never content with the practical, parochial, and powerful argument that slavery was bad for the white race, Blair somehow managed to conjure up the bogey of monarchy.

True, French bayonets propped Maximilian up on the Mexican throne, but most Americans took little interest in Latin America. President Lincoln was never much interested in Mexican schemes. As a former Whig, he had long detested American imperial designs on her southern neighbor. A politician of moral vision, Lincoln was also an eminently practical man, and he was content to fight one war at a time. Blair, on the other hand, was obsessed with the monarchical threat on America's southern flank. Democratic politicians, even those with free-soil proclivities like Blair's, had a weakness for Latin American ventures.

Somehow, any threat to American national solidarity caused Blair to see monarchy in the wings. Months before the firing on Fort Sumter, the elder

statesman told Lincoln that the North was "as much bound to resist the South Carolina Movement, as that of planting a monarchy in our midst by a European potentate." The days of Jackson seemed not far removed to Blair, who still called the secessionists of 1860-1861 "nullifiers." His policy of resisting secession was up-to-date, all right, but the assumptions behind it were decades old. Earlier still, just after Lincoln's election in November, 1860, Blair had given him a piece of bad advice, telling him to mention colonization in his letter accepting the Republican nomination. This would have the practical effect of warding off "the attacks, made upon us about negro equality." Blair did not leave the subject on that banal, but practical plane, however. He also launched into an elaborate analogy between the Chiriqui Improvement Company, an outfit poised to colonize blacks in Latin America, and the old East India Company, which had made England's empire in India possible. The same anarchy which had invited English intervention in India through a private corporation prevailed "among the little confederacies . . .

South of the Free States of this continent." Chiriqui, Blair said, "may be made the pivot on which to rest our lever to sway Central America and secure . . . the control . . . necessary for the preservation of our Republican Institutions." He was like an ancient and battered weather vane rusted into pointing fixedly in the same direction all the time. Sometimes the winds shifted so that he pointed the way truly, but the key factor was his fixity, not his wisdom.

Inside Blair's odd-shaped and proverbially ugly head, there swam a strange array of sophisticated but old-fashioned ideas. The electoral defeat of Breckinridge, Bell, and Douglas could lead him to think, not of possible civil war or the deeper problem of slavery and racism which underlay that threat, but of Mexico and monarchy. He could leap from politic considerations of the racial views of the American electorate to geopolitical blather about analogies to the British empire. And all this was mixed with occasional acute judgments and a charming self-deprecation. In a letter written before Lincoln's election, Blair told his son Frank that Lincoln had "genius [and] . . . political knowledge" and stressed the importance of his honesty in bringing support. Blair described himself as "a sort of relic which Genl Jackson wielded against the very Nullification" which again threatened the Union.

Smith leaves much of this out, and, in doing so, he nearly leaves Blair out of his biography of Blair. It is most unfortunate that Smith chose to write a "life and times" of Blair, for his life was long and his times comprehended most of American political history from the Era of Good Feelings to the end of Reconstruction. Smith spends entirely too much time in describing general political events, sometimes well and sometimes poorly, and far too little time in analyzing Blair's political vision.

One cannot, from all evidence, dismiss as claptrap and window dressing the grand geopolitical context of Blair's often crudely practical ideas. Though attempting to escape the wrath of Northern racism may appear to be the only operative content in Blair's colonization obsession, in fact the analogies to England and the muttering about monarchy seem really to be the heart and kernel of his thought. In the letter suggesting that Lincoln talk of colonization as a way to ward off accusations that Republicans advocated racial equality, Blair explained the connection between monarchy and slavery. The Southern "oligarchy," he thought, had lost its American love of freedom and saw the "degraded lower orders of whites" as fit only to be slaves or soldiers. Southerners would rather fight than work, and such pre-bourgeois attitudes (Blair did not use that term) would lead to monarchy. From this system of ideas, at least in part, came the Blairs' famed obstinate resistance to secession and compromise!

Francis P. Blair's fevered vision of American politics was always informed by his acquaintance with world history. From the men he regarded as the great luminaries of American history, Washington, Jefferson, and Jackson, Blair claimed to have learned the inevitability of a final solution to America's race problem. "The period has come," he told Lincoln after his election, "which Mr. Jefferson saw would arrive, rendering the deportation or extermination of the African Race from among us, inevitable." He pointed to the "Hostilities of irreconcilable Castes" which "marked the annals of Spain during 800 years, springing from the abhorrent mixture of the Moors with Spaniards, in the same peninsula." Lincoln called him "Father Blair," and one can imagine the mixture of awe and incredulity with which he must have regarded such cosmic musings. The President's own political vision included little of this grand world-historical baggage. Yet at the moment of his greatest political influence on the Lincoln administration, the time of the Hampton Roads Peace Conference, Blair insisted to Lincoln: "You see that I make the great point of this matter that the War is no longer made for slavery but monarchy." The old man blurred his fears that Jefferson Davis would league with a foreign monarchy to save Southern independence. He babbled that Napoleon had wanted a black army from Santo Domingo to invade the American South, stir up insurrection, and bring about French conquest of the United States. At Hampton Roads, by contrast, Lincoln scoffed that he left history lessons to Seward. The President



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FIGURE 3. Francis Preston Blair, Jr.

was interested in Southern peace terms — even, as G.S. Boritt has suggested, in how much coin it would take essentially to bribe the South into reunion.

Jefferson Davis was a political realist too. He told Blair that France did not want a Mexican empire as much as she wanted a base from which to build up her feeble navy. Davis, at war with an industrially superior nation, knew the lure of coal, iron, and timber. Blair did not get the point. He still feared that Davis would become France's ally in subjecting the United States to monarchy. The elder statesman told Lincoln, far too busy even to read long letters from his generals, to observe the parallels with modern times in Carlyle's *Life of Frederick the Great*.

An old-fashioned idea lay at the heart of Francis P. Blair's thought and that of his influential children. Jacksonian ideologues always saw sharp class conflicts in America. They thought government aid to private corporations aided only rich men. They denied the possible general benefits of economic development. Such issues were irrelevant during the Civil War, but seeing Southern society in the same class terms was not. A perception of class conflict between Southern poor whites and a slaveholding oligarchy apparently lay at the bottom of Blair's fears of Southern willingness to invite monarchies to save their movement for independence. This error in perception of Southern society had serious political consequences. Montgomery Blair inherited from his father a penchant for seeing class conflict, whether it was there or not. Montgomery always insisted that secession was a minority movement and that "Military Government" in the Confederacy held the essentially loyal Southern masses at bay. This was carrying the common Northern belief in the existence of a slave oligarchy to an extreme, but in 1861 more people than the Blairs believed it. Even President Lincoln may have thought that way in 1861. He at least insisted that there was no majority for secession in any Southern state except, perhaps, South Carolina.

Ever the practical observer, Lincoln came to see that this could not be so. After two and one-half years of war, Lincoln admitted that it would be difficult to find even ten percent of the population in any Southern state loyal to the Union. Montgomery Blair never changed his mind. The rigid Blair class analysis ground to its inexorable conclusions. The point



A SELF-APPOINTED ENVOY.

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FIGURE 4. This cartoon from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, January 21, 1865, depicted Blair as a granny, trying to bring the Confederacy to the bargaining table with sugarplums and barley water. General Ulysses S. Grant points to cannonballs as the more appropriate way of convincing the Confederates to rejoin the Union.

of the Postmaster General's famous speech at Rockville, Maryland, late in 1863, was that there existed a loyal *majority* in the South against which the North must never be at war. It brought him the undying hatred of all the Radical Republicans (except friendly Charles Sumner). There is little wonder the Blairs opposed Reconstruction. They had never seen much disloyalty in need of restructuring into loyalty.

It is almost impossible to write a decent biography of a man the biographer hates. The spirit rebels so at spending great amounts of time with an unlikable person that it can result only in unbalanced fulmination against the poor subject of the biography. The problem with Elbert B. Smith's *Francis Preston Blair* is not its mild bias in favor of its subject. This is almost necessary in order to attract a biographer to work, and it is rendered harmless by the common knowledge that most biographers suffer from this fault. Abraham Lincoln himself scorned biography because of its predictable lionization of its subject, no matter what the subject's faults.

The problem with this book is more serious. Smith fails essentially to capture Francis Preston Blair's nature. The

ideologue surfaces only occasionally, most notably in Smith's treatment of Frank Blair's speech "The Destiny of the Races of this Continent," delivered in Boston in 1859. There the great Blair political universe is laid out in an astonishing array of references to Dr. Livingstone on African hybrids and to the role of Moors in Spanish history. The speech, as Blair's daughter observed, dazzled "not only the politicians — but the Literati — & State street gentility." Smith's discussion of it dazzles the modern reader too and should make him wonder where all these ideas came from and whether they were going in the Civil War. This rare and brief glimpse of the Blair world view is but a dazzling moment in what is otherwise a competent, but sometimes sketchy, chronicle of Blair's role in many events of American history described at too great length. The inner springs of this fascinating elder statesman's thought and actions are too often left unexplained. And, as Smith's book clearly proves, Blair's thought and action were too important to too many people — from Andrew Jackson to Abraham Lincoln, from Thomas Hart Benton to Charles Sumner — to be left in such a state.



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LAWANDA COX ON RECONSTRUCTION IN LOUISIANA: A REVIEW

President Lincoln's attempt to reconstruct Louisiana has been the focus of a tremendous amount of attention in recent years. It has provided the exclusive subject matter of two major books in the last three years: Peyton McCrary's *Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction: The Louisiana Experiment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) and LaWanda Cox's *Lincoln and Black Freedom: A Study in Presidential Leadership* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981). Other historians have given it considerable notice in books, articles, and scholarly papers of broader focus. Reconstruction in Louisiana is a hot topic these days.

The attraction lies not so much in swampy Louisiana itself as in the subject of Reconstruction, for Lincoln made Louisiana a sort of model of his policy toward the conquered South. Interest in Reconstruction is high for three principal reasons. First, scholars, jurists, reformers, and policy makers have been look-

ing for precedents set in the 1860s and 1870s for the modern movement for civil rights for black people a century later. Indeed, the measures of the modern era are sometimes called the Second Reconstruction. That initial impulse to study the first Reconstruction is well on the wane, but scholars trained in graduate schools in the 1960s did their initial work on Reconstruction and continue to work in the field even though many reformers, jurists, and policy makers have abandoned those concerns. If that second factor may be characterized as scholarly inertia, a third factor is surely scholarly thoroughness. There is a sense abroad in academe that Reconstruction scholarship, like the Second Reconstruction to which it was a handmaiden, must move on to new insights that go well beyond the now old-fashioned attempt to prove that Reconstruction was not as bad as most white Americans used to think.

LaWanda Cox, with her late husband John, wrote one of the



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FIGURE 1. When Union forces arrived in Louisiana, Lincoln had his first big chance to reconstruct a state.



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FIGURE 2. Some New Orleans residents scrambled to take the oath of allegiance to the United States.

1960s' most important and influential works on Reconstruction, *Politics, Principle, and Prejudice, 1865-1866: Dilemma of Reconstruction America*, a book which did much to destroy Andrew Johnson's reputation. Mrs. Cox was already a mature scholar at the advent of the heyday of Reconstruction studies. Her interest in the subject endures because of essentially scholarly impulses. In her long career, she came across documents which did not seem to jibe with the accepted wisdom on Abraham Lincoln's Reconstruction policies, and she wanted to figure out what was correct.

In one respect, but in one respect only, her conclusions are not original. She shares with McCrary and other scholars a view, fast gaining wide acceptance among historians, that Abraham Lincoln would have reconstructed the South had John Wilkes Booth not stopped him. In light of the preponderance of evidence in favor of this view — one thinks immediately of the numerous Lincoln letters urging military governors in the South to get on with the work of reconstructing their states — the conclusion may seem obvious and banal. A quick glance at the conclusions reached by the previous generation of historians like Allan Nevins and James G. Randall, will quickly reveal the unanimity of the contrary opinion until very recent times. And outside the scholarly community, the older view still reigns supreme and shows few signs of movement toward the newer view. It will require many more reiterations than Mrs. Cox's to turn the tide of majority opinion, and there is nothing wrong with her reasserting this truth.

The real originality of *Lincoln and Black Freedom* lies in the nature of Mrs. Cox's proof of the proposition that Lincoln would have reconstructed the South had he lived to complete his second term. Readers of McCrary's book in particular will be surprised to see who Mrs. Cox's heroes and villains are. The reader should not be fooled by her assertion that her approach in the book was "one of reflection rather than research." She has solid documentation for her most important conclusions. She

read the crucial documents and, more important, read them with care and with discerning and sympathetic intelligence. It is a convincing book.

The care with which Mrs. Cox read the documents is apparent in her first chapter. Relying for the most part on documents read by hundreds of historians before her, she manages nevertheless to describe Lincoln's policies toward slavery in a fresh and exciting way:

When war opened possibilities unapproachable in the 1850s, Lincoln's reach was not found wanting. Indeed, there is something breathtaking in his advance from prewar advocacy of restricting slavery's spread to foremost responsibility for slavery's total, immediate, uncompensated destruction by constitutional amendment. The progression represented a positive exercise of leadership. It has often been viewed as a reluctant accommodation to pressures; it can better be understood as a ready response to opportunity. Willing to settle for what was practicable, provided it pointed in the right direction, Lincoln was alert to the expanding potential created by war. Military needs, foreign policy, Radical agitation did not force him upon an alien course but rather helped clear a path toward a long-desired but intractable objective. Having advanced, Lincoln recognized the danger of a forced retreat, a retreat to be forestalled with certainty only by military victory and constitutional amendment. His disclaimer of credit for "the removal of a great wrong" which he attributed to "God alone," though in a sense accurate, for the process of emancipation did not follow his or any man's design, was nonetheless misleading.

Although historians have often remarked on Lincoln's "growth" in office, none has heretofore called the rapidity of change in his views on slavery "breathtaking."

Can Mrs. Cox document it? In a word, yes. She notes that Lincoln was the first President ever to ask Congress to pass an amendment to the Constitution fully drafted by the President

himself (in December, 1862). "Lincoln took the initiative against slavery," she says. When he had first suggested his scheme for gradual and compensated emancipation in the border states the previous March, "Congress had not yet taken any action against slavery as such." The first Confiscation Act (August, 1861) affected only slaves used for military purposes, and the bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia had not yet passed either house. Even Wendell Phillips had to admit that Lincoln was "better than his Congress fellows." The Phillips letter came to light only in 1979. Mrs. Cox has been reading as well as reflecting.

Mrs. Cox's interpretation of the Emancipation Proclamation likewise gives firm support for her use of the word "breath-taking":

In issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln is sometimes seen as lagging behind Congress, which had passed the Second Confiscation Act on July 17, 1862. Yet the first draft of his proclamation was presented to the cabinet just five days later and his decision had been made earlier, at least by July 13 — that is, before Congress acted. When his advisers convinced him to delay until a Union victory, Lincoln promptly issued the first paragraph of his draft as a separate proclamation giving warning that all persons who did not return to their allegiance would be subject, as provided by the Confiscation Act, to forfeitures and seizures.

The discerning intelligence with which Mrs. Cox read the documents is everywhere apparent. She knows that tone is

important. In discussing Lincoln's message on compensated emancipation of the spring of 1862, she notes that in "earnestly beg[ging] the attention of Congress and the people," he "rejected the suggestion that he substitute 'respectfully' for 'earnestly.'" He pleaded for his program "in full view of my great responsibility to my God, and to my country." Mrs. Cox adds shrewdly: "In this first major antislavery document of his presidency the word order of 'God' and 'country' may be not unworthy of note." Lincoln was honest, but he was also crafty, as Mrs. Cox knows from her sensitive reading of his works. When rumors that Confederate peace commissioners were coming to Washington threatened passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in the House early in 1865, James Ashley asked the President for a denial.

Pressed, Lincoln sent a one-sentence, carefully phrased response: "So far as I know, there are no peace commissioners in the city, or likely to be in it." Peace commissioners, as Lincoln well knew, were on their way — but to Fortress Monroe rather than to "the city."

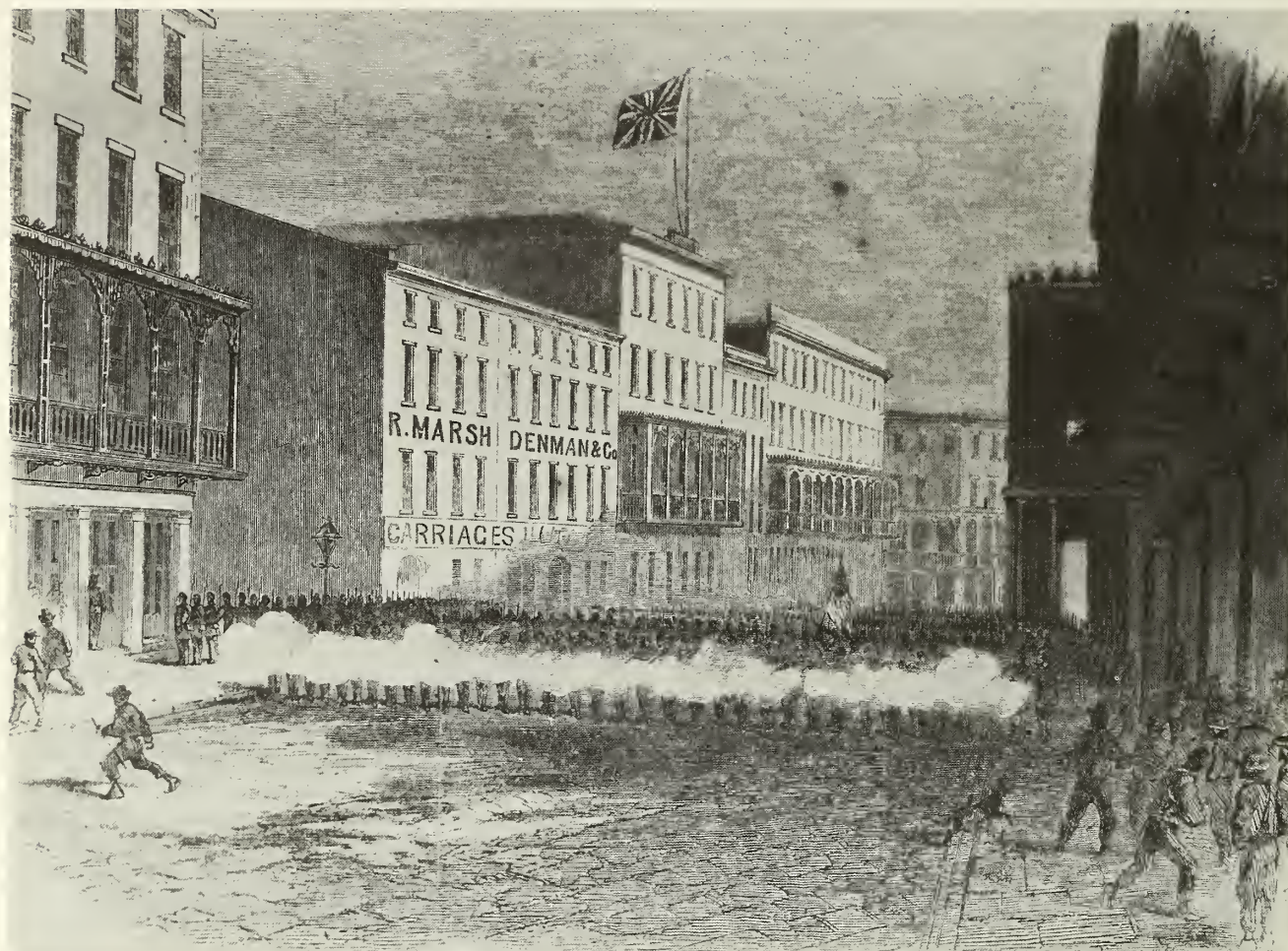
Lincoln and Black Freedom is a book for aficionados who will appreciate the subtle interpretations and the careful attention to chronology.

When Mrs. Cox turns her formidable talents to the subject of Reconstruction in Louisiana, she reaches even more impressive and original conclusions. Her straightforward chronological approach allows her first to document Lincoln's education into the realities of disloyal sentiment in the South. Beginning with the notion that indigenous forces in occupied Louisiana could,



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FIGURE 3. Union generals lectured Louisiana's blacks on their duties as freedmen.



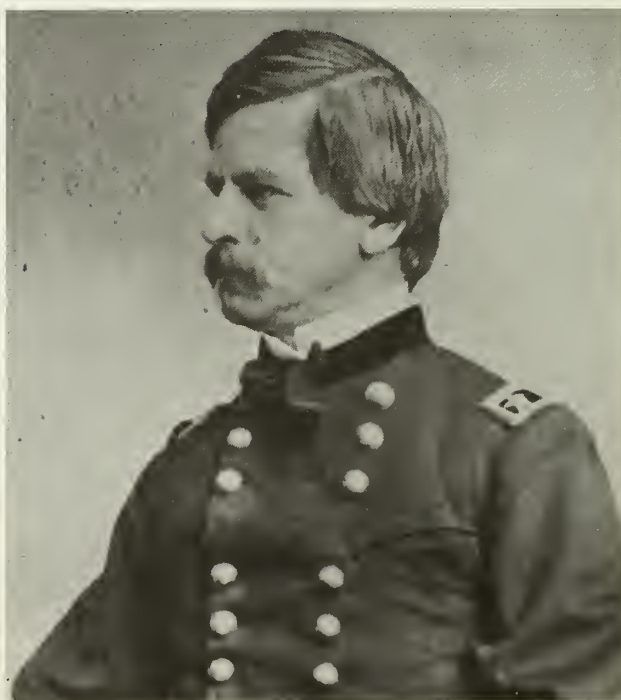
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FIGURE 4. Military power was much in evidence as Union soldiers practiced "street firing" in New Orleans.

with a little encouragement, create a new free state government, the President learned gradually that it could not be done — at least not before 1864, when the threat of Democratic control of the national government might end all efforts to undermine slavery. Slowly he came around to the view of General Nathaniel P. Banks, the Northern military commander in the region, that it could be done by means of military pressure without anything approaching a majority of the local population. That education informed Lincoln's general Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction of December 8, 1863, which asked only for a ten percent nucleus around which to form a free state in any of the occupied South. Banks's idea, which soon became Lincoln's, was to organize elections for state offices under the old prewar proslavery constitution and declare the parts of that constitution upholding slavery null by sheer military authority. It would take too long to wait for majority opinion even among the loyal people of Louisiana to come around to the conviction that slavery should be abolished in a new state constitution.

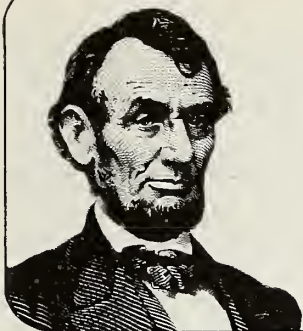
Readers of Peyton McCrary's *Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction* will be surprised to hear of this concurrence of views between Lincoln and General Banks. McCrary accused Banks of deceiving Lincoln into thinking that the local antislavery loyalists, the Free State Committee led by Thomas J. Durant, were dragging their feet in registering voters for a constitutional convention. Banks, McCrary argued, gained control of the political situation in Louisiana and engineered a conservative "coup" which undermined the more radical Free State movement. As Mrs. Cox points out, however, it was a long letter from Durant to Lincoln (October, 1863) which revealed to the President that little or nothing was being done in Louisiana.

(To be continued)



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FIGURE 5. General Nathaniel P. Banks.



Lincoln Lore

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LAWANDA COX ON RECONSTRUCTION IN LOUISIANA: A REVIEW (Cont.)

The President then blamed Banks for the lack of progress, and the general, whose military duties kept him from seeing Lincoln's letter until December 2nd, did not get around to defending himself until December 6th. Banks said, and it was true, that he had no orders authorizing him to take charge of the political situation. Since word that it would take a long time to organize a constitutional convention in Louisiana came from Durant himself, it is little wonder that Lincoln turned to Banks and sustained him, as Mrs. Cox argues, when he differed with Durant and the Free State movement.

Mrs. Cox's understanding of the situation in Louisiana is markedly different from McCrary's. In her book, Banks is depicted as leading a temporarily successful Unionist move-

ment in Louisiana fully in keeping with the President's wishes. In his book, Banks is depicted as the President's deceiver. In Mrs. Cox's work, Durant appears as a difficult stumbling block to progress toward the goal of making Louisiana a free state before adverse political developments in 1864 could undermine the work. In Mr. McCrary's work, Durant appears as a man thoroughly wronged by Banks and a President working under false assumptions about political reality in Louisiana.

Mrs. Cox wins this argument hands down. Durant chose to make his name in history by opposing the Lincoln-Banks government and by claiming that it was engineered to undermine the radical Free Staters' desire to urge suffrage for Negroes in Louisiana. *Lincoln and Black Freedom* shows that in fact



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FIGURE 1. Governor Michael Hahn's inauguration in New Orleans, March 4, 1864.



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FIGURE 2. Mrs. Banks sponsored a splendid entertainment on election day in Louisiana.

the President, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, and Durant himself were, in the beginning, all in agreement on the suffrage issue. All three were committed to registering freeborn black citizens, principally the New Orleans Creoles.

Durant had not gone farther than that in urging black suffrage by February, 1864. And Lincoln had already gone that far. He had twice approved registration of freeborn Negroes as voters in Louisiana. Lincoln approved Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton's order of August 24, 1863, telling the military governor in Louisiana to register "all the loyal citizens of the United States" there. Chase had objected to the first draft of the order, which stipulated organizing a constitutional convention based on the white population. The final order stipulated "loyal" citizens rather than "white" citizens. "For the instructions," Chase said, "we are indebted to Mr. Stanton and the President." In the following November, Chase had to write to urge Durant, in charge of the voter registration, to register Negro citizens. Durant replied that he favored it himself, but it would be helpful to have specific directives from Washington. Chase went to Lincoln. "I informed the President of your views on this subject," Chase told Durant on December 28, 1863, "and he said he could see no objection to the registering of such citizens, or to their exercise of the right of suffrage."

Banks ruined this hopeful unanimity of opinion on a delicate subject by opposing any black suffrage. He feared that the issue would divide Southern loyalists and endanger the abolition of slavery by the new state government. The split in the Louisiana loyalists which followed was Banks's fault, as McCrary and Cox both agree, but it was also Durant's fault. In a huff over Banks's assumption of power in Louisiana at the President's direction, he chose not to discuss and compromise but to fight the Banks government to the bitter end.

That opposition, combined with the suspicions of the radical

antislavery men that Lincoln was not radical enough to suit them, eventually doomed the Louisiana experiment. Banks, a political general if there ever was one, proved to be politically inept. Mrs. Cox describes the demise of the experiment with equally convincing attention to close reading of the documents and careful chronology. In sum, there is a great deal more in the book than can be described within the confines of this review.

If there is a significant flaw in *Lincoln and Black Freedom*, it is an error of omission rather than one of commission. Mrs. Cox tends to be a bit skimpy on biography. With as famous a figure as Lincoln, this is no problem. In his case she very properly focuses on the particular problem and aims at straightening out the reader's understanding of Lincoln's role in it.

With Nathaniel P. Banks, Mrs. Cox's failure to provide a wider biographical focus is more problematic. "The fate of Lincoln's free state," she says accurately, "suggests the vulnerability of presidential purpose and power to ineptitude of execution, the obstinacy of human nature, and misperceptions fired by the passion of great ends linked to personal conceits." She documents Lincoln's purpose in the Louisiana experiment better than anyone has ever done before. She finds the important instances of ineptitude. She describes Durant's obstinacy in unforgettable terms. She shows the vital links between personal conceits and conflicts over national policy. Yet Banks's inept policies are central to the story, as is his obstinacy and his conceit. They are as central as Lincoln's purposeful leadership, but they are not as well described.

Mrs. Cox realizes that Banks was too optimistic. When he told Lincoln that reconstructing Louisiana as a free state would be no more difficult than "the passage of a dog law in Massachusetts," Banks made one of the worst predictions in American history. Thirteen years of Federal occupation and struggle — some of it bloody — followed Banks's assumption of political control in Louisiana. There was special irony, as she points out,



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FIGURE 3. While Louisiana's loyal citizens voted, a military band played in Canal Street. It was George Washington's Birthday, and the occupying troops marked the anniversary with patriotic fervor.

"in the political general failing to be politic." She shows very well what went wrong in Louisiana, but she does not say why Banks erred. There was the factor of his gross optimism, of course, but why was he so optimistic?

Only biography can tell, and the problematic nature of Banks's conception of the Louisiana experiment seems glaring enough to demand more attention to his biography. Advising President Lincoln on Louisiana policy in 1863, Banks said:

Offer them a Government without slavery, and they will gladly accept it as a necessity resulting from the war. Other questions relating to the condition of the negro, may safely be deferred until this one is secured. If he gains freedom, education, the right to bear arms, the highest privileges accorded to any race and which none has yet proved itself worthy unless it be our own, his best friend may rest content for another year at least.

In January, he told Lincoln that the government he was creating in Louisiana with the help of Federal bayonets would provide "for the gradual restoration of power to the people" but "in such manner as to leave the control of affairs still in the hands of the comm[an]ding General." When Louisiana citizens elected Michael Hahn governor, they "understood . . . that Mr. Hahn represents a popular power entirely subordinate to the armed occupation of the state for the suppression of the rebellion and the full restoration of the authority of the government." "The election perilled nothing," Banks told the President — "Had it resulted in the election of an opponent, he would be without power." When Louisiana's new constitution abolished slavery in September, Banks crowed: "History will record the fact that all the problems involved in restoration of States . . .

have already been solved in Louisiana with a due regard to the elevation of the black and security of the white Race."

Such optimism seems glaringly wrong in the light of subsequent events in Louisiana, but it is more than "twenty-twenty hindsight" that makes the error clear. Foresight at the time surely demanded that General Banks ask what would happen when the Federal troops left. Would the Negro's advance, left to the future, occur then? When the Confederates returned, the opposition would surely win elections. Would the opponents be powerless then? To be sure, Banks's statements were meant to let Lincoln know that the military would not allow a disloyal government to rule if the Unionists lost in 1864, but should not even that mention of the subject have caused Banks to wonder about 1865 or 1866?

Banks was sanguine. He would let the future take care of itself. His government would satisfy the abolitionists for another year (he thought, wrongly), and that was all that concerned him. Banks lived day to day, so to speak, but he also thought that his work in Louisiana guaranteed him immortal fame. "History" would record his deeds. He was conscious of history. He was thinking about what would be said of his Louisiana government in the long run, but he had no long-range plan. Why not?

It is impossible to tell for certain, but a look at the general's career before the Louisiana experiment offers at least one enticing clue. General Banks's first command was the Department of Annapolis. There, in 1861, he controlled the corridor from the Northern states to Washington, D.C. His headquarters was in Baltimore, and Banks "found the situation one of Southern hearts and Northern muskets," as his able biographer, Fred

Harvey Harrington, states. He tried to be conciliatory first, and secession sentiment soared. He was ordered to get tougher. Eventually, Banks's soldiers installed a pro-Union successor to the notoriously secessionist police marshal.

Banks then became the head of the Army of the Shenandoah, and more of Maryland came under his jurisdiction. On George B. McClellan's orders, he arrested secessionist members of the Maryland legislature on their way to Frederick for a special session. His soldiers "protected" the polls, as pro-Union forces swept to victory in the autumn elections.

In later years, Banks would boast that his administration of Maryland was a model for Reconstruction:

The secession leaders — the enemies of the people — were replaced and loyal men assigned to . . . their duties. This made Maryland a loyal State. . . . What occurred there will occur in North Carolina, in South Carolina, in Georgia, in Alabama and Mississippi. If . . . those States shall be controlled by men that are loyal . . . we shall then have loyal populations and loyal governments.

The Maryland experience helps to explain Banks's optimism.

As was more often the case than has been commonly recognized in the study of Reconstruction, such optimism was rooted in a particular analysis of Southern society. The analysis perhaps came easier to former Democrats (like Banks), who were used to invoking a form of class analysis in their prescriptions for political policy. It may have come easier as well to a politician of working class origins (like Banks, the "Bobbin Boy of Massachusetts"). Banks vowed to build a loyal Louisiana out of the "humble and honest farmer, the poor mechanic, the hard-

working classes, the bone and sinew of the land." It will not do to dismiss such statements as the rhetorical litany of American politicians. Banks had blamed secession on a tiny elite of rich planters and a Southern urban aristocracy. He thought that a "clear majority of the people were . . . opposed to the war and could you remove from the control of public opinion one or two thousand in each of these States . . . you would have a population in all of these States . . . loyal and true to the Government."

General Banks may have been inept, but his miscalculations were born of practical experience in Maryland and of assumptions about the social composition of Southern society. His conceit stemmed from memories of his role in one of the North's two big political successes early in the war, the retention of Maryland in the Union. His obstinacy in pursuing his political plan was rooted in a fairly systematic political philosophy which told him what Southern society was like. The deeper roots of the ineptitude, conceit, and obstinacy of the other characters in the Louisiana experiment likewise demand study.

There are limits to what any one historian can do. Mrs. Cox has done more than most. One need only think of the muddled state of scholarship on early Louisiana Reconstruction before her work — and that of McCrary and other recent scholars as well — to be grateful for the modern accomplishments in this field.

On February 10, 1982, the Civil War Round Table of New York City gave LaWanda Cox the Barondess/Lincoln Award for *Lincoln and Black Freedom*. She deserved it. Her book is a contribution to Lincoln scholarship that will last.



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FIGURE 4. A photographer in New Orleans, E. Jacobs, took a picture of Banks and his staff in the spring of 1864. This woodcut was copied from it.

